CONTENTS

Vol. XXVIII, No. 2, Jan., 1959

Literature and Party Line	Leonard Forster	97
Bozorg Alavi's *Portmanteau*	G. M. Wickens	116
An Expatriate in Boston	Austin Warren	134
Automatic Calculating	W. H. Watson	149
Keats and the Romantic *Sehnsucht*	Albert Gérard	160
Local Colour in Canadian Fiction	William H. Magee	176

REVIEWS

Anatomy of Criticism	M. H. Abrams	190
Young Mackenzie King	D. G. Creighton	197
Science and the Humanities	Alan D. McKillop	200
The Variorum Yeats	James Reaney	203

COPYRIGHT, CANADA, 1959

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE IN WHOLE OR IN PART MUST BE OBTAINED IN WRITING FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO PRESS.

CONTRIBUTORS

LEONARD FORSTER
Professor of German, University College, London; author of *German Poetry, 1944–48* (1948), *The Temper of Seventeenth-Century German Poetry* (1951), etc.; editor of *The Penguin Book of German Verse* (1957)

G. M. WICKENS
Associate Professor of Near Eastern Studies, University College, University of Toronto; editor of *Avicenna: Scientist and Philosopher* (1952)

AUSTIN WARREN
Professor of English, University of Michigan; author of *Rage for Order: Essays in Criticism* (1948), *New England Saints* (1956), etc.

W. H. WATSON
Professor of Physics and Director of the Computation Centre, University of Toronto

ALBERT GÉRARD
Professor of English, Université Officielle du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi; author of *L'Idée romantique de la poésie en Angleterre*

WILLIAM H. MAGEE
Professor of English, University of Alaska

M. H. ABRAMS
Professor of English, Cornell University; author of *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (1953), *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (1957), etc.

D. G. CREIGHTON
Professor of History, University of Toronto; author of *John A. Macdonald: The Young Politician* (1952), *John A. Macdonald: The Old Chieftain* (1955), *Harold Adams Innis: Portrait of a Scholar* (1957), etc.

ALAN D. McKILLOP
Professor of English, The Rice Institute, Houston, Texas; author of *The Early Masters of English Fiction* (1956), etc.; editor of *James Thomson: Letters and Documents* (1958)

JAMES REANEY
Assistant Professor of English, University of Manitoba; author of *The Red Heart* (1949) and *A Suit of Nettles* (1958)

LITERATURE AND PARTY LINE

Leonard Forster

One of the major problems of literature in general and of lyric poetry in particular in our society is the growing gap between the creative artist and his public. It is a commonplace in these days that the question "For whom does the poet write?" has no satisfactory answer. Poetry is for many poets what Gottfried Benn said of his own poetry—an art of monologue.

Whereas in the West a poet feels himself cut off from his audience, a Communist poet, ideally, addresses himself directly to an audience which he knows and with which he feels himself in contact. As a Communist his feeling of team awareness binds him to his public, or at least to part of it. But what is his public? The public of a Communist poet in a non-Communist state does not consist entirely of Communists; it also includes people who have to be won over, whose allegiance to their own society must be shaken, whose social consciences must be aroused, or who in the last extreme are that sort of *bourgeois* who is there to be *épaté*, shocked, or made ridiculous. These people, moreover, make up the majority of his audience. He cannot be content with a monologue; he must get at them somehow. If he restricts himself to writing party slogans, marching songs, and so forth, he is really preaching to the converted, though of course it is always a good thing to keep them steadfast in the faith. But a wider public demands different treatment, and here a Marxist poet can ally himself with those *bourgeois* poets who, without being Marxists, criticize the society in which they live with varying degrees of vehemence from a wide variety of points of view and who appeal to all those whose social conscience pricks them, whose idealism shows up the discrepancy between the present and the ideal, or whose youth renders them impatient of existing conditions—in fact all those whom Sartre calls "révoltés, non pas révolutionnaires" (*Situations*, II, Paris, 1948, p. 176). Here a Marxist finds considerable support. He may indeed have started his literary career as just such a *bourgeois* poet him-

self, as have a number of Communist writers of our day, including two poets, Brecht and Becher, whom I wish to consider. A writer in a Marxist state however has a different function. It is his duty not to criticize (except within certain well-defined limits laid down by party policy from time to time) but to soothe, encourage, and persuade, "to produce great socialist works of art which are partisan and close to the people"; great importance is attached to "the work of persuasion in which firmness of principle and sensibility are linked" (Theses of the Cultural Conference of the S.E.D., [Sozialistische Einheitspartei] Berlin, October 1957, reported in *Democratic German Report*, January 3, 1958). This function sets a writer different problems and we shall see how our two poets have dealt with them.

Both were born in the 1890's, Johannes R. Becher in 1891, Bertolt Brecht in 1898, both into good *bourgeois* homes in South Germany, Becher as the son of an *Oberlandesgerichtsrat* in Munich, Brecht of a well-to-do factory manager in Augsburg. Both studied medicine, a study which brings young people closer to human misery than most others and introduces them in the course of their clinical work to social conditions outside the normal experience of well-brought-up middle-class children. Becher had already begun to publish before World War I—wild prophetic outpourings, chaotic in form and content; he was, like many of his contemporaries, a *révolté* not a *révolutionnaire*. But behind the chaos there was a search for a Utopia, for an order somehow to arise out of the chaos. He was to find this order and this Utopia in the Communist Party, which he joined in 1918.

Brecht's literary beginnings came later. His service in the army medical corps kept him occupied in the war years, and it was not until 1922 that he came to the fore with two plays—*Trommeln in der Nacht* and *Baal*—both owing much to the contemporary expressionist rebellion of which Becher was by then a distinguished exponent. Both plays deal with a figure outside society: one the vital and uninhibited poet Baal, the other the familiar returned soldier. It is interesting to see that in *Baal* Brecht incorporates a poem by Becher into the play, and that the context is ironical. We shall return to this poem later.

Brecht's great success was the *Dreigroschenoper* (1928), a modernization of Gay's *Beggar's Opera* with overt socialist Marxist tendency, but specifically borne up by Brecht's characteristic sympathy for the underdog, the criminal by force of circumstances. This extremely successful play was enthusiastically received by all kinds of intellectuals in the twenties and early thirties, and copies of the play and the gramophone

records of the songs from it were cherished possessions in intellectual circles under the Nazis. In those years it was forbidden, as it came under the heading of *zersetzende Literatur*, and indeed this is just what it was and was meant to be. It put across social criticism to a society extremely in need of it but unable to profit by it. It was also a remarkable example of a new kind of dramatic technique, that of the "epic drama." Here Brecht renounces dramatic illusion and the idea of "enjoyment" and aims at an audience like the cabaret audience, which is conscious of a play as a spectacle and does not become emotionally involved in it or "enjoy" it. It was the beginning of the now famous "Verfremdungseffekt," the theory of which Brecht developed in a series of notes on the *Dreigroschenoper*; these, however, do not reflect the state of affairs at the time the play was written, but date from rather later. The revulsion against "enjoyment" is interesting, and I shall return to it later. It did not prevent the opera from being enjoyed, especially in intellectual circles (not by any means all of the Left), because it introduced a new note of astringency and made people feel they were facing facts. In the event, this was an illusion; they were not facing facts, but Brecht wanted them to face them. In so far, the new technique did not succeed, and Brecht later admitted as much (*Kleines Organon fürs Theater*, § 42). Brecht's point is that the normal theatre employs illusion and hypnotizes spectators into a state of passivity; it is in fact an "opiate for the people"; its effect is, in Brecht's word, "culinary"—the same as that of a good dinner. In his view the theatre should stimulate to thought and action. The normal theatre presents events as irrevocable and appeals to the empathy of spectators to accept them as something divorced from their normal life. In Brecht's view events should be presented as "events which society can do something about" and shown in such a way that they are deprived of the atmosphere of familiarity which makes people in ordinary life just accept them and prevents people from doing anything about them. The theatre should present the structure of society (on the stage) as subject to alteration by society itself (in the auditorium). Each of Brecht's plays therefore has a moral; it shows a state of affairs which can—and should—be altered by social and political action. Thus it is no chance that he calls many of his plays "Lehrstücke," which one might translate by "didactic pieces." More than this, every scene inculcates its own political and social lesson. This is particularly plain in his remarkable play *Mutter Courage*, and the way it was performed in London by the Berliner Ensemble a couple of years ago made it quite clear. The long waits between the scenes, which had no apparent functional reason

(in the sense that there were no complicated properties to move or scenery to shift), were there, so it seemed to me, to break up the flow of the whole and give the audience time to reflect on each scene and see it as a playlet which drives home a Marxist thesis. As an American critic has observed (Francis Fergusson, *Sewanee Review*, LXIV, Autumn 1956, pp. 544 ff.), Brecht "detaches us from the human scene only to attach us all the more firmly to the rationalist power drive of the revolution." But a non-Marxist audience does not necessarily take it that way, and for my own part I found myself getting progressively crosser as the actors, so it seemed to me, deliberately threw away the splendid dramatic opportunities provided by the text. I felt this particularly in the great last scene of *Mutter Courage*, to which I was looking forward all through the play, doubtless with the expectation of indulging in typically *bourgeois* hypnotic empathy; I felt I had been cheated of something to which I had a right. But Brecht would say that I had no right to it and had no business to expect it of his play, which was acted —under his direction—to destroy precisely that "enjoyment," and instead to fill me with the feeling of the senselessness of war and send me out into the street resolved to do something about it. "It is evident," says the American critic whom I quoted just now, "that Brecht depends upon his fighting creed to give both form and direction to his great talent. . . . But his influence appears, in our theatre, to be dissociated from the Marxism Brecht wishes to teach. We respond to his savage rejection of all traditional forms and institutions, and to his triumphant reduction of the human image to that 'clever and mischievous little animal' that Eliot mentions. This vision hits us all the more sharply because it is not fully accepted. It is placed in no wider context of human experience and potentiality. . . . So he leaves us unsatisfied." It is I think true that he leaves us unsatisfied, but it is more difficult to say whether he leaves a Marxist audience unsatisfied. I do not think that Brecht's message is a "triumphant reduction of the human image" to a "clever and mischievous little animal." On the contrary, Brecht has been occupied all his life by the theme of the "good man"; this is a natural theme for a Marxist in opposition. People are naturally good, but circumstances are too much for them. This theme occurs already in the *Dreigroschenoper*:

> We'd all like to be good, that's very clear
> But sad to say this Paradise comes never
> Supplies are scarce and man is far too low
> Who wouldn't choose to live in peace for ever?
> But force of circumstance won't have it so!

It becomes the subject of a whole play in *Herr Puntila* and in *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan*. The answer to the problem is clear: "force of circumstance won't have it so"—then change the circumstances! Change them from a capitalist society, in which the alternatives of goodness on the one hand and fitness for life on the other are mutually exclusive, to another better world. But we are entitled to ask with Volker Klotz (*Bertolt Brecht: Versuch über das Werk*, Darmstadt, 1957, p. 23) whether any form of society is going to do more than palliate the circumstances without resolving the dilemma, and whether the dilemma is not part of the *condition humaine* itself.

As long as Brecht was a poet in opposition, whether *révolté* or *révolutionnaire*, his attack on *bourgeois* society could take the form of an attack on the traditional "pleasure" of the existing theatre; he could do good work by presenting unpalatable truths in an astringent form, by concentrating on *prodesse* rather than *delectare*. But as soon as he became an official playwright in a Marxist state, this function was no longer so important. It did not recede entirely, however, for a "people's democracy" is not a fully Communist state like Russia but a state in a process of development towards it. Large sections of the public still have to be won for Marxist literature. "It is necessary," as the Theses of the Cultural Conference of the S.E.D. in Berlin in October 1957 laid down, "not only to publish socialist literature but also to tend it. . . . In the book trade it is necessary to combat existing tendencies to concentrate on 'easily saleable' [presumably non-Marxist] literature. . . . A main aim must be to win the workers as regular readers. This demands a constant, patient, co-ordinated propaganda for literature in the entire population and particularly in the working class" (*Democratic German Report*, January 3, 1958). Didactic literature therefore still retains an important function, but nonetheless literature as entertainment, as *delectare*, becomes increasingly important. And so we find in 1949 Brecht, who had in earlier years "withdrawn from the pleasant," now developing an aesthetic theory of the drama based on entertainment (*Kleines Organon fürs Theater*). But the plays he has produced since then are in no way different from the earlier ones—as far as *delectare* and *prodesse* are concerned there is nothing to choose between *Mutter Courage* written in 1939 and *Das Leben des Galileo Galilei* published in 1950 or *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* in 1953. (Shortly before his death Brecht told Peter de Mendelssohn that he had written no new plays since his return to Germany; these must therefore have been written in America.) What Brecht has in fact done is, by an elegant sleight of hand, present didactics

as entertainment and tell his audience (and the party) that in our time, in our society, we *are* entertained when we are being instructed.

The changed situation produces a new doctrine; it is no longer necessary to shock the *bourgeois*, but to entertain the workers. This entertainment is, however, not just entertainment for its own sake; it is harnessed to "the rationalist power drive of the revolution." The audience is constantly reminded that things must go on getting better and better in the new state and that it is up to them to see that they do. There is nothing soothing about Brecht, even when he is supposed to be entertaining his own people. His basic concern for the underdog and the oppressed, and his basic conviction that the society he lives in is very far from being perfect, remain unshaken by changes in political circumstances and by requirements of official policy. It is well known that for some time before his death in 1956 Brecht was not entirely *persona grata* in official circles in the new state. "Without me," he writes in "An die Nachgeborenen," "the rulers would have been more secure." The reason is clear: at a time when people needed to be soothed and convinced that the cure for all their troubles was at hand, that they had only to trust to the Party and the Russians, Brecht inconveniently continued to insist that life was not perfect, that there were still oppressors and oppressed and that people themselves must do something about it. This was tactless, for "human beings are very useful. They can fly and they can kill. But they have one fault: they can think." The official view was different. It was represented by Johannes R. Becher.

I have already mentioned Becher's beginnings. He was a typical case of the *révolté*, who set out to smash the *bourgeois* Wilhelmine world of the nineteenth century which, if we may believe his partly autobiographical novel *Abschied*, was symbolized for him in a particularly distressing fashion by his father the *Oberlandesgerichtsrat*. This personal involvement may explain the violence of Becher's early outpourings, in which a natural facility for utterance was allied to violent but undifferentiated emotion. In this experience, however, he was not alone; German literature of those years is dominated by the father-son conflict. Nor was he alone in his determination to break down the logical barriers of language in order to make way for something new. "Alogical bombs undermine traditional syntax, *bourgeois* linguistic architecture," he wrote in these years. Looking back on them he was able to write in 1921:

> Something of my language. A poem about my language. That meant: telling you something of the story of one of my most marvellous revolutions. Berlin. Mid-war. Run wild deep in myself. In ecstatic blood-midsummer-night.

Suddenly: I spoke with tongues, I felt wrote shouted myself and hurled: Syllables syllables, never-known words. End and at the same time beginning of the German language. O more still! O that was not me any more! A revolt! an Utterance! My mission! Worn-out sentences went pop! . . . Thunderstorms explosions cataracts. Inescapable. By authority of immense forces. Integrated, advancing, in iron discipline. March past of triumphant cohorts. [Quoted in translation from Albert Soergel, *Dichtung und Dichter der Zeit: Neue Folge*, Leipzig, 1926, p. 567.]

Without looking too closely at any of the utterances in this remarkable piece of prose, it is clear that it describes a moment of poetic inspiration. If one contrasts it with the famous letter Rilke wrote from Muzot on the completion of the *Duineser Elegien* the difference in tone is striking. And whereas for Rilke the experience at Muzot was unique, for Becher it is only "one of my most marvellous revolutions." Moreover even Rilke, who cannot be said to have had a low opinion of his own ability to handle German, never qualified any experience of his with the words: "End and at the same time beginning of the German language." There is a strain of *hubris* here which is part of the attitude of anti-*bourgeois* revolt; for, despite the fact that Becher at this time was already a member of the Communist Party, all this is, in Sartre's sense, revolt not revolution. The word 'revolution' is used, but it is degraded and made meaningless by the plural. At the end comes the yearning for order out of chaos, the order that his Communism brought to him: "By authority of immense forces. Integrated, advancing, in iron discipline." The military vocabulary used by this convinced anti-militarist at the climax is I think not without significance.

Here the creative process is seen as an act of revolt and defiance of existing society, the creation of a chaos so that order may come out of it. What of the function of a poet? Becher in 1916 defines it in a characteristic poem entitled "Vorbereitung," (quoted here from Kurt Pinthus' anthology *Menschheitsdämmerung*):

Der Dichter meidet strahlende Akkorde.
Er stösst durch Tuben, peitscht die Trommel schrill.
Er reisst das Volk auf mit gehackten Sätzen.

Ich lerne. Ich bereite vor. Ich übe mich.
Wie arbeite ich—hah leidenschaftlichst!—
Gegen mein noch unplastisches Gesicht—:
Falten spanne ich.
Die Neue Welt
(—eine solche: die alte, die mystische, die Welt der Qual austilgend—)
Zeichne ich, möglichst korrekt, darin ein.

Eine besonnte, eine äusserst gegliederte, eine *geschliffene* Landschaft schwebt mir vor,
Eine Insel glückseliger Menschheit.
Dazu bedarf es viel. (Das weiss er auch längst sehr wohl.)

O Trinität des Werks: Erlebnis Formulierung Tat.

Ich lerne. Bereite vor. Ich übe mich.
. . . bald werden sich die Sturzwellen meiner Sätze zu einer unerhörten Figur verfügen.
Reden. Manifeste. Parlament. Das sprühende politische Schauspiel. Der Experimentalroman.
Gesänge von Tribünen herab vorzutragen.
Menschheit! Freiheit! Liebe!

Der neue, der heilige Staat
Sei gepredigt, dem Blut der Völker, Blut von ihrem Blut, eingeimpft.
Restlos sei er gestaltet.
Paradies setzt ein.
—Lasst uns die Schlagwetter-Atmosphäre verbreiten!—
Lernt! Vorbereitet! Übt euch!

A poet's function is not to soothe but to activate: "He carries the people away with staccato sentences." He learns, prepares himself, looks forward to a day when the combers of his sentences will join into a new and unheard-of pattern; a list of *genres* follows, which has dated nowadays, culminating in the bathos of "the experimental novel." All this in the service of "Humanity! Freedom! Love!" The new, the holy state will bring Paradise, but meanwhile the "atmosphere of fire-damp" must be spread abroad.

The first scene of Brecht's early play *Baal* shows the poet Baal at a dinner given to him by some influential admirers after a reading of his poetry. An enthusiastic young lady reads to him a couple of contemporary poems which she considers particularly significant; one of them is this one. Baal takes no notice at all. From his point of view (Brecht tells us he is an asocial figure in a society which is itself asocial in a different way) the poem is evidently just not worth powder and shot.

In fact this poem is a programme piece of poetic theory. It is not intended for the workers, who in 1916 would probably have understood it only as a piece of impressive rhetorical noise, but for an intellectual *bourgeois* public. This is also true of the other poems Becher wrote at the time; the Marxist intellectual in opposition addresses other intellectuals, not necessarily Marxist, in opposition. Becher was successful with poems of this kind, and some of his volumes published in the teens

and early twenties went through several editions. In 1927 he published a volume of verse, *Im Schatten der Berge*, in which he turned to a more simple style and simple, narrative themes evidently designed to reach a wider and less sophisticated audience, and, like "Tod des Arbeitslosen" or "Auswanderer," containing easily assimilable Marxist social criticism. In this vein he continued through the many vicissitudes which befell him after 1933—emigration to Switzerland, France, and finally Russia. Throughout these years he produced a great deal of verse of very unequal quality. He was one of the most consistent and successful Communist propagandists of the emigration and had certainly earned the welcome which came his way when he returned to Germany in the wake of the Russian armies in 1945. He has now for some time been officially recognized as the most eminent author of the German Democratic Republic and has been officially styled "Dichter der deutschen Nation." In 1945 he became the President of the Kulturbund zur demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands and in 1952 Vice-President of the (East) German Academy of Arts. In 1949 *and* 1950 he was awarded the Nationalpreis I. Klasse, in 1952 the International Stalin Prize, in 1954 an honorific decoration—Vaterländischer Verdienstorden der DDR in Silber. In the same year he became Minister of Culture, a post he held until his death in 1958. (Compare this with the postwar recognition given to Brecht, who in 1951 was awarded the Nationalpreis I. Klasse and in the same year the Stalin Prize, but no orders, no ministerial position, no presidentship of Academies, and only one national prize against Becher's two.)

It is interesting to see the development in Becher's work which has brought him these honours and this reputation. It can be done quite simply—perhaps too simply—by comparing some of his poems as they originally appeared with the form they take in the collected edition of his verse which appeared in 1949. Becher occupied an honoured place in the now classic expressionist anthology *Menschheitsdämmerung* (compiled by Kurt Pinthus in 1920) with fourteen poems; twenty-three poets were represented, only five of them with more poems than Becher. Of these fourteen poems I have been able to trace only three in the collected verse of 1949, all of them severely cut about and adapted. The yearning for God so characteristic of the expressionists has been eliminated and religious terminology in general removed. But above all, the excesses of the expressionist vocabulary and syntax have been pruned—just those traits which made the poems difficult of access for the workers. The programme poem "Vorbereitung" appears in the following form. The title has been changed; it is now called "1916" and runs as follows:

Der Dichter meidet strahlende Akkorde.
Streik. "Krieg dem Krieg!" Er peitscht die Trommel schrill.
Er reisst das Volk auf mit gehackten Sätzen.
(*Dichtung*, I, Berlin 1949, p. 51)

This is all that is left. But even here there have been changes. The blasts on the tuba—"er stösst durch Tuben"—perhaps because they were too reminiscent of a military band, or because Becher realized that not even a poet can play more than one tuba at a time (though I should like to see Mr. Danny Kaye try), or because the words might be misinterpreted to suggest a poet forcing his way through tubes of toothpaste, have been replaced by actual slogans, in one of which readers are urged to cast out the devil by means of Beelzebub. The New World, the New Holy State, Paradise, have all mysteriously disappeared, together with Parliament, the experimental novel, and, most important of all, the "atmosphere of fire-damp." Circumstances have changed and the party line with them. The New World and the New Holy State have arrived, though Paradise has not yet begun; Parliament and the experimental novel are out of date, and the "atmosphere of fire-damp" must on no account be encouraged. It is still a poet's function to activate the people, but to what purpose? "Streik" is mentioned, but there are no legal strikes in a people's democracy; "Krieg dem Krieg" is as hollow a slogan as "the war to end war" proved to be at the time Becher originally wrote this poem. And one is left with the feeling that "Streik, Krieg dem Krieg" are really only "glowing chords" of the kind a poet is meant to avoid. The original poem was a passionate expression of revolt. Revolt is out of place in 1949; so it is pared away until what is left of the poem is virtually devoid of meaning. This movement becomes even clearer when we compare an early poem with a late one on the same theme. The long poem "Mensch stehe auf" which appears in *Menschheitsdämmerung* (p. 211) begins as follows:

Verfluchtes Jahrhundert! Chaotisch! Gesanglos!
Ausgehängt du Mensch, magerster der Köder, zwischen Qual Nebel-Wahn Blitz.
Geblendet. Ein Knecht. Durchfurcht. Tobsüchtig. Aussatz und Säure.
Mit entzündetem Aug. Tollwut im Eckzahn. Pfeifenden Fieberhorns.
Aber
Über dem Kreuz im Genick wogt mild unendlicher Äther.

Accursed century! Chaotic! Without song!
You men dangling, the leanest of baits, amid pain, mist-madness, lightning-flashes.

Dazzled. A slave. Ploughed up. Raving. Leprosy and acid.
With bloodshot eye. Hydrophobia in the eye-tooth. Whistling feverhorn.
But
Above the cross on your back swells friendly infinite Aether.

It contains much more in the same strain of bold and inspiring revolt, though the involuntary hexameter in the last line quoted, with its reminiscence of Hölderlin, makes one wonder how much else is derivative. The collected verse of 1949 presents on the first page of the first volume the following poem under the title "Wir, unsere Zeit, das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert":

Ich weiss; hier diese Zeit, in der ich bin,
Ist allgewaltig. Keine andere kann
Sich mit ihr messen. Sinn und Widersinn
Der Zeit verheissen: eine Zeit bricht an!
  Mit ungestümer Kraft gestalte ich
Mich um, dass ich nicht diese Zeit verliere.
Und sieh; die neue Zeit gestaltet mich
Und wandelt mich, denn ich bin ganz der ihre.
  Oft blicke ich in dich hinein verwundert,
Du, meine Zeit! Und hätte ich die Wahl,
Mir auszusuchen eine von den Zeiten,
  Ich wählte dich und würde noch einmal
Verkünden stolz und rufen in die Weiten:
Wir, unsere Zeit, das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert!

I know the age in which I exist is all-powerful. No other can compare with it. Sense and countersense of the age promise: a [new] age is dawning! With unbridled force I reshape myself so as not to lose this time. And lo! the new age shaped me and changed me, for I belong wholly to it. Often I look astonished into you, you my times, and if I had the chance of choosing one or other of the epochs, I would choose you, and would again declare with pride, and shout into the distances: We, our time, the Twentieth Century!

The doctrinaire tameness of this needs no comment, but the lines in the second quatrain immediately strike one as being profoundly true for Becher himself. One gathers from a comparison of the two poems that the 1920's were a bad time in which to live, but that the later 1940's were a good time. The expressionist free rhythms have disappeared and we have here a very conventional sonnet consisting of five-foot iambics, ingeniously constructed so that in each quatrain the word "Zeit" occurs at least twice, with slightly different meaning, and this device is also carried through in the sextet, though the exclamation "Du meine Zeit!" is perhaps unfortunate. (This play on words is, however, not Becher's

discovery; it is derived from a well-known poem "Gedanken über der Zeit" by the seventeenth-century poet Paul Fleming. Becher was later to include it in the anthology of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century poetry which he edited in 1954.) Here we have not merely a tame acceptance of what the century has brought (though of course we might say that all things considered Becher had not done so badly out of the century) but also a return to traditional and soothing poetic forms and rhythms, as though to indicate that order has been achieved at last and everything is all right after all. This calm somehow does not fit with the phrase "Mit ungestümer Kraft" (with unbridled force), which is evidently a *cliché*, a carry-over from an earlier style, for the rhythm of the poem belies it; there is no force here, let alone unbridled, and the whole poem is flat, conventional, and derivative. It is plain that Becher is trying to achieve a style which will be simple and comprehensible, but that it is evading him. The trouble seems to be that he is not aware of this; he thinks he has it in the bag:

Das Schlichte

Als einst er schrieb die trunkenen Gedichte,
Und überstürzte sich in seiner Kraft,
Und er zerschlug die Masse und Gewichte,
Und, hingerafft von einer Leidenschaft,
Er machte sich und sein Gedicht zunichte:
Da war er sich noch selber rätselhaft.

Bis eines Tags er stand in einem Lichte,
Es rief die Zeit ihn an, dass er berichte:

In schlichten Worten sprach er die Gedichte. . . .

Das Allerschwerste aber war: das Schlichte,
Und dieses Schlichte war: die Meisterschaft.

(*Dichtung*, II, p. 57)

Simplicity

When long ago he wrote those drunken poems, and tripped over his own strength, and smashed the weights and measures, and, carried away by his own passion, destroyed himself and his own poem, he was still a mystery even to himself. Until one day he stood in a blaze of light, the Age called upon him to testify: he spoke the poems in simple words. . . . But the most difficult thing of all was simplicity, and this simplicity was—mastery.

The tone of this poem is not modern; it is less modern even than that of Becher's early poetry, which has already dated noticeably; it is the sententious tone of the beginning of this century; the rhythm and the

atmosphere of consecration it calls up are reminiscent of Stefan George, but instead of consecration there is only pretentiousness and sentimentality. Brecht at one point has much the same thing to say, but characteristically he has no abstract simplicity but a perfectly defined object in view: it is Communism itself. The last lines of "Lob des Kommunismus" run:

Er ist das Einfache,	It [Communism] is the simple thing
Das schwer zu machen ist.	That's difficult to do.

(*Hundert Gedichte*, Berlin 1955, p. 265)

Both poets are talking about simplicity. There can be no doubt which of them has achieved it. Becher in fact has failed to find a style of his own; the "unbridled force" with which he has reshaped himself only suffices for the writing of flat and undistinguished verse which could have been written at any time since about 1850, and the rather touching feeling of rejuvenation through contact with the young which finds expression in "Altersgedicht" (*Glück der Ferne leuchtend nah*, Berlin, 1951, p. 23), is belied by the whole texture of his work. What I think this poem implies, however, is that Becher finds himself faced by a new public with new requirements and that he professes to find the task stimulating. His task is to keep his readers happy, to convince them that the cure for their troubles is at hand, that

> Ein Staat, der so geliebt ist und geehrt,
> Ist unser Staat, und dieser Staat sind Wir:
> Ein Reich des Menschen und ein Menschen-Staat.
>
> (*Glück der Ferne*, p. 15)

Such a state, which is so beloved and so honoured, is our state, and we are this state, a realm of humans and a human state.

To do this, he has to cater for a quite definite taste at a not particularly high level, while making his writing look like serious poetry. This task can be accomplished quite simply by giving people the sort of poetry they have always been taught to regard as poetry—conventional forms, conventional diction, and conventional responses: Goethe, Schiller, the Romantics, all diluted with a great deal of water. Reading Becher's later poetry, especially the volume with the significant title *Glück der Ferne leuchtend nah* (future happiness glowing near), one has the feeling that the whole course of German poetry since the middle of the last century has gone for nothing. Becher is playing all the time for sentiment that is by now cheap and responses that are by now conventional; he is

fostering a fuzzy romantic attitude towards nature and is dealing in a different medium with precisely that kind of hypnotic effect which Brecht tried to banish from the stage and did banish from his own poetry:

Regen	*Rain*
Der Regen raunt, der Regen rinnt,	The rain whispers, the rain flows,
Und einer staunt und einer sinnt,	And a man wonders and a man ponders.
Der Regen hält ihn leise wach,	The rain quietly keeps him awake,
Der Regen flüstert auf dem Dach.	The rain whispers on the roof.
Und einer sieht die Dunkelheit	And a man sees the darkness
Und sinnt dem Rätsel nach der Zeit,	And ponders on the mystery of time,
Und sinnend, staunend wird er inn	And pondering, wondering, he apprehends
Im Dunkel einer Zeit Beginn. . . .	In the dark the beginning of an epoch. . . .
Der Regen wandert durch die Nacht	The rain wanders through the night
Und einer in dem Dunkel wacht,	And a man is awake in the dark,
Und einer sinnt und einer staunt—	And a man ponders and a man wonders—
Und Regen rinnt und Regen raunt.	And rain flows and rain whispers.

(*Glück der Ferne*, p. 42)

This poem has nothing to communicate; it is mere cyclic sound. The obscurity in meaning produced by the misplaced verbal prefix "nach" in "Und sinnt dem Rätsel nach der Zeit" and the awkward placing of the genitive in "Im Dunkel einer Zeit Beginn" show this clearly; moreover this very phrase "Im Dunkel einer Zeit Beginn" is the ideological justification for the poem: the new epoch is to come as quietly and effortlessly as the rain flows. The poem is about flowing and the sense, if it has any importance at all, should flow as easily as the sound; one should not have to interrupt the flow and pause to work out the syntax. Furthermore, the production of this kind of agreeable noise has been the sort of thing any German can do since the days of Brentano and Eichendorff, who did it much better. One is reminded of the exclamation of Werner Bergengruen on the receipt of some verses from a nameless lady who admired his work: "And so you are too late. Why wait forty years? You ought to have sent your poems to Paul Heyse" (*Die Rittmeisterin*, Zürich, 1954, p. 39). This accusation cannot be levelled against the next poem in the volume, "Sopran," in which Becher is obviously rilking:

Sopran, du aller Stimmen Übersteigen!
Es zittert in dir nach ein Flügelschlag.

Soprano, you transcendence of all voices!
A wingbeat leaves its trembling trace in you.

This too by now is the kind of thing that almost anybody can do, but it is what a large number of people recognize as "poetry." "Sopran" is for those who have heard of Rilke. "Vollmond im August," with its arch flavour of Enid Blyton and "There are fairies at the bottom of my garden," is for those who have not:

Vollmond im August,
Glühend roter Ball,
Träumt er hoch im All
Von der Erde Lust,

Und träumt er davon,
dass er fern, ganz fern
Auf den Erdenstern
Leuchte als Lampion?

Full moon in August,
Glowing red ball,
Does she dream high in the Cosmos
Of the joy of Earth,

And does she dream
That she far far off
On the terrestrial star
Gleams as a lantern?

(*Glück der Ferne*, p. 41)

I know of no German equivalent of *The Stuffed Owl*, but if there ever is one, this poem deserves to be included in it. It is noticeable that most of the poems in the English *Stuffed Owl* were written by rather humourless people using a conventional diction which was already outworn by the time they were writing. This is also true of Becher here and elsewhere in his later work. One could perhaps put it this way, that Becher is dealing in *gesunkenes Kulturgut*. Bergengruen's mention of Heyse is appropriate here. Paul Heyse was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1910 and died in 1914, when Becher was already writing; what he would have recognized as a poem is what the immense mass of honest lower middle-class and working-class readers would recognize as a poem today. But he was born in 1830, two years before Goethe's death, and his style was formed in the fifties and sixties of the last century. Becher is trying to reach a public for which "poetry" still means just that sort of poetry, and this is very largely the public his earlier work was designed to shock and disturb. "That is what," writes Becher now, "the people asks of the poet. It wants to discover itself in his work. . . . It wants to meet again with its dreams and its longings"; and again: "Different times need different songs, different images. Let us look upon a new, peaceful, happy life" (*Verteidigung der Poesie*, Berlin, 1952, p. 154). He is trying to reach this public and satisfy it; the Minister of Culture aims, not to educate it as Brecht does, not to improve its antiquated taste, but to

lull it with a kind of literary opiate, to keep it happy and tell it what to think. "Lasst der Lieder Sinn uns richtig deuten" (Let us interpret the meaning of these songs correctly), he says with raised forefinger:

> Diese Lieder sind ein Friedensläuten.
> Alle Klänge wollen Frieden werden,
> Jedes Wort mahnt: 'Friede sei auf Erden!'
> Und ein Ruf ist und ein Herzensschrei:
> Friede, Friede, nichts als Friede sei!
> (*Glück der Ferne*, p. 74)

These songs are a carillon of peace. All sounds seek to become peace. Every word admonishes: "Let there be peace on earth!" And there is a shout and a cry from the heart: Peace, peace, let there be nothing but peace!

"Admirable sentiments!" one thinks to oneself, until one looks at the poem more closely. "Peace, peace, let there be *nothing* but peace!" Just what does this mean? Under what conditions can this be realized? For the believing Christian presumably in heaven; but Becher is not a believing Christian and he is writing for a public in which believing Christians are discouraged. But he cannot keep away from religious terminology, and the chiliasm which, as Norman Cohn has shown us, lies behind Communism, comes out clearly in this phrase. But so does something else. Outside heaven, the only way in which a condition of *nothing* but peace can be realized is death. The peace which Becher is preaching turns out to be the peace of the grave.

Revealing inadvertency like this can be perpetrated only by someone who is operating with a set of *clichés*, not by anyone who uses language either critically or creatively. But in justice to Becher it seems that he himself was not entirely happy with this state of affairs. He was aware that what he was producing did not correspond to his real vein; but what was he to do? This sort of stuff was required by the party line of the moment, and someone had to write it. It is "utilitarian poetry" in quite a different sense from that intended by Erich Kästner when he coined the term. "A main aim must be to win the workers as regular readers"; "If we had a writer for the broad public and one with a style of speaking and journalistic writing which reached outwards and downwards, I should be able to devote myself entirely to my own specific kind of writing," Becher remarked rather wistfully (*Verteidigung der Poesie*, p. 160). As it was, he was doing what he believed to be an honest workmanlike job to meet a genuine need, and I see no reason to call his honesty in question.

Becher has many poems on the lot of the working classes deceived and deluded by their masters, but none with the taut brevity of phrase and immediacy of image that Brecht shows, for instance, in "Kälbermarsch" (*Hundert Gedichte*, p. 215):

Hinter der Trommel her	Behind the drum
Trotten die Kälber.	The calves come trotting.
Das Fell für die Trommel	The drumskin
Liefern sie selber.	Is their own skin.

Brecht at an early stage achieved a personal style, a spare bony style of great economy in word and rhythm, using a simple and immediately forceful imagery comprehensible even to the most unliterary; it is remarkably successful in the so-called "Kinderlieder" which contain some of his finest poetry. He can use it for a wide variety of purposes: some is overt propaganda, much of which has now dated, or operates with topical names and personalities which soon will date and even now have associative power only for those who accept Brecht's politics. But one of the "Kinderlieder," "Der Pflaumenbaum," shows Brecht at his most brilliant:

Im Hofe steht ein Pflaumenbaum,
Der ist klein, man glaubt es kaum.
Er hat ein Gitter drum,
So tritt ihn keiner um.

Der Kleine kann nicht grösser wer'n.
Ja, grösser wer'n, das möcht er gern.
's ist keine Red davon,
Er hat zu wenig Sonn.

Den Pflaumenbaum glaubt man ihm kaum,
Weil er nie eine Pflaume hat.
Doch er ist ein Pflaumenbaum,
Man kennt es an dem Blatt.

(*Hundert Gedichte*, p. 45)

There's a plum tree in the yard, you'd hardly believe how small it is. It has a fence round it, and that way no one tramples it down.

The poor little thing can't grow any bigger. It wants to grow, of course, but there's no chance of that, it gets too little sun.

It's hard to believe it's a plum tree because it never has a single plum. But it *is* a plum tree; you can tell it by the leaf.

A trifle, a mere nothing, one might say. But in easy colloquial language that "a child can understand" (the word "Pflaumenbaum" itself is the only one in the whole poem which has more than two syllables), Brecht has captured the Marxist doctrine of economic environment in a simple

and convincing image, and drives it home with the rat-trap snap of the last word of the last line: "Man kennt es an dem Blatt." It is Brecht's old theme of "Force of circumstance won't have it so," and the allied one of "All created things need help from all," that are involved in this simple and at first sight trifling poem. The same sure hand can be seen in the concise and hard-hitting phrases of the "Deutsche Marginalien" of 1938 (*Hundert Gedichte*, p. 189), or in the distress and suppressed triumph mingled in the poem "Rückkehr" (*Hundert Gedichte*, p. 313).

Brecht has taken advantage of the loosening and revitalizing of German poetic diction by the expressionists and has formed a style and diction entirely of his own, adequate to the task in hand: "the simple thing that's difficult to do." Becher on the other hand has been unable to do this; he created an approximation to a style of his own in his expressionist years, but, like many "Stürmer und Dränger," he was never able to grow out of it into a new organic stage of development. This contrast arises, I think, partly because of the fortuitous difference of seven years in the poets' ages, which enabled Brecht to profit by the experiments Becher and his age-group had initiated, but mainly because Brecht is a real poet and a truly original brain, whereas Becher is a familiar type of humourless German *bourgeois* with a rush of words to the mouth. Sartre has characterized the type of writer to which I think Becher belongs: "Bourgeois honteux, écrivant pour les bourgeois sans l'avouer, il peut bien lancer les idées les plus folles: les idées ne sont souvent que des bulles qui naissent à la surface de l'esprit. Mais sa technique le trahit" (*Situations*, II, p. 177). Try as he may, Becher sinks back time and again into his own class, whereas Brecht, despite his class consciousness, is a person to whom class differences do not really apply. Both are honest according to their lights, but for the one honesty consists in following the party line and the requirements of the hour, for the other in following his own carefully and consistently thought out conception of the function of a Communist writer. It is plain that the first has an easier time than the second, but that he is often forced to write against the grain of his talent. This comparison is difficult to push further because the one is so very much more gifted than the other. In the West we are inclined to respect more the man who sticks to his own idea of honesty; it looks to us like a piece of concealed individualism. I am not sure whether we are right on this last point, for of the two men we are considering both are equally devoted to the cause they both have at heart; but one was big enough to transcend it, the other was not.

I have quoted more extensively from Becher than from Brecht because he is less known and his work is more difficult of access. There are good reasons for this; one is that the publishing rights for Brecht's work are in the hands of a West German publisher, Peter Suhrkamp. Another is, I suspect, that those responsible for framing policy in these matters in the German Democratic Republic are well aware not only that Brecht is the most considerable literary figure they have, but also that he appeals to Western readers for a variety of reasons, some of which I have indicated. It would be desirable if the West thought that all East German literature were on the lines followed by Brecht. Significantly, the journal *Sinn und Form*, which is as it were the Democratic Republic's literary shop window on its western frontage, has devoted two special numbers to Brecht (in 1949 and 1957) comprising nearly 1,000 pages between them. It has given no such space to Becher, though Becher was one of its founders and the journal rejoiced in his patronage. As so often, export goods are high class; the home market contents itself with "seconds" and articles labelled "Not quite perfect."

I hope I have been able to show not only the difference between these two men but also the sort of dilemmas to which they have been subjected. To both the last stanzas of Brecht's poem "An die Nachgeborenen" apply:

> Even the hatred of meanness
> Distorts the features
> Even anger against injustice
> Makes the voice grow harsh. Alas, we
> Who wished to lay the foundations of kindness
> Could not ourselves be kind.
>
> But you, when at last it comes to pass
> That man can help his fellow men,
> Do not judge us
> Too harshly.
>
> (*Hundert Gedichte*, p. 317)

BOZORG ALAVI'S *PORTMANTEAU*

G. M. Wickens

The beginning of the modern phase of Persian literature is variously dated between the middle and the end of the nineteenth century: certainly, it would be difficult to offer a convincing argument for any earlier dating. Thus, it was a later, and also an altogether slower, less explosive, sparser growth than was the Arabic renaissance known as the *nahda*. Unlike the latter, it was only partially and indirectly induced and sustained by the intensive European penetration of the Middle East in the post-Napoleonic period. Moreover, in an area so circumscribed and isolated, so comparatively underpopulated and impoverished, as Persia had become in preceding centuries, the new movement tended to be confined to a small and unique circle, as compared with several important centres and coteries of literary activity dispersed throughout the Arabic-speaking world.[1] Yet, holding in mind these essential differences and distinctions, one may still remark many significant points of resemblance between the two movements.

Both have been nationalistic and revolutionary, though the Persian writers, in close response to their own immediate situation, have inclined (until recently, at least) to a greater concern with domestic tyranny than with foreign interference. Within this spirit of nationalism, both groups have tended at times to engender a sort of atavistic racialism, glorying less in their immediate cultural and spiritual forbears (the great figures of the Arabo-Persian civilization of mediaeval Islam) than in, for example, the Zoroastrian Aryans, the Phoenicians, the ancient Egyptians, the Carthaginians—each as local geography might determine. There was in both movements, in the very nature of things, a marked preoccupation with journalism and journalistic methods: the output in this field was often, especially in the early days, of a high order of merit, but in the long run the effect on the development of many writers was not wholly for good. Both movements were, and to some extent still are, rent by a conflict of Ancients *versus* Moderns: the "Ancients" are loyal to

the classics of their respective linguistic traditions, the "Moderns" enthusiastic for a thoroughgoing imitation of a heterogeneous, and often somewhat *démodé*, range of European models. These models have been found primarily in French and Russian literature, less—with certain conspicuous exceptions—in their English and German counterparts. In the extreme cases, Dostoievsky will rub shoulders with Conan Doyle, while Dumas assorts uneasily with Nietzsche! In either movement there have been powerful forces acting towards the approximation of the literary language to that of everyday usage, both vulgar and polite: with Arabic, where the various colloquials have often drifted nearly as far from each other as from the classical language, this tendency has created a whole series of fresh problems; but in Persian, which has remained reasonably homogeneous and without any real distinction between the spoken and the written forms, the campaign has had a brilliant success at all levels of composition. In purely creative writing (as against scholarly and scientific output), both movements have achieved, it is generally agreed, more impressive results with the short story and the novel than with poetry and the drama.[2] This is especially true of the Persian writers, who have been able to exploit an immemorial national aptitude for anecdotage and story-telling of all kinds, though their present mastery of the accepted short-story form and technique owes little to native tradition.

Persian literature since World War I is represented, at the most generous estimate, by only a dozen or so authors, several of whom are no longer alive.[3] Even of these few, it is already clear that some have been given undue importance by their admirers. The greatest figure among them, especially in the field of the short story and the essay (the *genres* in Arabic and Persian literature are not always to be clearly distinguished), is commonly allowed to be Sadeq Hedayat, though I personally find a good deal of his work pretentious, decadent, and sickly to a degree. When, after several abortive attempts in earlier years, he eventually succeeded in committing suicide in Paris, in 1951, at the age of 48, he left behind a large volume of work, sporadically produced and of uneven value. Practically none of this has been put into English, though a little has been rendered into French by V. Monteil, who appears to be making a special study of Hedayat. The writer I have chosen as the central figure of the present study, Bozorg Alavi, gives, in the view of many, all promise of equalling and surpassing Hedayat for sheer force and originality; I personally find him, as well, infinitely more

sympathetic in his combination of every subtlety and delicacy of touch with utter normality and a firmly based sense of humour.

Before attempting, however, to introduce the man and his (for me) most representative work, I feel it necessary to set down certain preliminary observations of a character possibly unexpected by anyone whose study of literature has been largely confined to Western writers working against a normal Western background. In the first place, it must be realized that the whole field of modern Persian literature is, even for most Western Orientalists, virtually unknown country. Works of biographical or bibliographical reference, in Persian or in European languages, are either non-existent, or very difficult to come by, or so unreliable as to be worthless as guides to this new territory. At the same time, modern writings are published in extremely limited editions, which are rapidly exhausted and often not reprinted for several years. The editions, where one can obtain them, are often bad, cheap, inelegant, and full of misprints. Moreover, in the vicissitudes of Persian political life over the last 35 years and more, whole editions of a work might be impounded by the police, with the odd copy, or a typescript, circulating illegally or outside Persia, until changed times should allow a new edition to be published once more. Not infrequently—and this is particularly relevant to Bozorg Alavi—the writer himself would be imprisoned for varying periods, and under police surveillance at other times. Such conditions, it will be understood, often make it fruitless, even embarrassing, for a scholar to pose legitimate questions, the answers to which, in other situations, would normally justify firm and confident statements about a writer's identity, his work, or his place in literature. Fortunately the essential facts concerning Alavi are tolerably well attested, and I was myself privileged—during the war-years in Persia—to meet him (once in the company of Hedayat) and to learn about him from his friends. On the occasion of our meeting with Hedayat, June 23, 1942, Alavi gave me copies of his books, including the collection of short stories that forms the basis of the present article. What I have to say in the present article, therefore, has the reliability of first- or second-hand information, and is said for the first time, so far as I am aware, in English.

Alavi is a short, dark, lively, and attractive man of about 48 or more. He comes of a good traditional Persian family, but has studied abroad, particularly in France and Germany. He has a sound knowledge of several European languages, including Russian, and has made a number of translations from them. With English and American literature he has

a wider acquaintance than have most of his countrymen. In the early thirties, when Communism seemed to many synonymous with the rescue and nurture of all that was good in a moribund society, Alavi was drawn to the Persian *Hezb-e Tūdeh* (Party of the Masses), an organization variously described, both by its own members and by outsiders, as Marxist, socialist, liberal, and so on, as occasion or prejudice might dictate. Later on in the same decade, he was, with a group of like-minded opponents of the Pahlevi régime, imprisoned by the late Reza Shah on charges of conspiracy and sedition; more fortunate perhaps than many of his fellows, he was still alive and comparatively unharmed five years later, when the Allied invasion of Persia (August 1941) effected a change of rule and the consequent release of many political prisoners. For the last 17 years, with only minor disturbances, Alavi has worked in journalism and radio; but he has continued his serious writing, and has produced a number of books of almost uniformly high standard (though most of them would not, for several reasons, be easy to examine at deserving length in an article of the present kind). Apart from the collection of short stories which I have selected for special study, he has written the following: *Prison Paper-Scraps* (*Varaqpārehhā-ye Zendān*) and *Fifty-three Persons* (*Panjāh o seh Nafar*), both fresh and moving accounts of his experiences of life in a Persian jail, in all its mixture of capricious cruelty and sentimental kindness; *The Letters* (*Nāmehhā*), another collection of short stories, published in 1951, his one work so far to be somewhat spoiled by leftist propaganda of an obtrusive kind; and *Her Eyes* (*Chashmhāyesh*), a novel of Parisian reminiscences published in 1952. None of his works, so far as I am aware, has been translated into any European language, nor has any study of him so far been published by a Western scholar.[4]

Alavi, it would seem, remains a convinced left-wing intellectual: it is still difficult for even the most intelligent of modern Persians, especially those with a lively social conscience but an atrophied sense of religion, to find their way to any more satisfactory position. But he is, as may soon be apparent, a genuine artist and craftsman, whose talent can be appreciated despite his convictions as well as because of them. He is, above all—even when he writes of foreign scenes and people—unmistakably Persian, a revolutionary, even a Europeanized revolutionary, but a revolutionary with a sense of his own national tradition. My translations and my detailed comments which follow will tell a story of their own, not only about Alavi himself but about modern Persia as well; however, if I venture at this point to suggest, as a rough guide

to the total situation, a comparison with any known figure, two names, not one, come instinctively to mind: Chekhov and Orwell, though the present study will show more of the Chekhovian than the Orwellian.

The Portmanteau (*Chamadān*),[5] Bozorg Alavi's first considerable published work, appeared in Tehran at the turn of the year 1934–5. It is a collection of six short stories written over the preceding two and a half years, the first four each of about sixteen pages and the last two of some twenty pages in length. The title, though neat and apt as applied to the whole collection, is in fact also that of the first story in the book.[6]

This eponymous first story, dated May 1932, is set in Berlin and the Sudeten spa of Zittau, and clearly owes much to the author's own period of study in Europe, even if it be not wholly autobiographical. Told in the first person, it is a tragi-comic tale of triangular relations, with the narrator and his father in fundamental opposition, and in particular rivalry for the love of a White Russian girl; driven by economic necessity and a designing mother, she finally takes the father, deciding that if she must have a husband, he will undoubtedly make the better one. (Alavi has in this story—the only instances in the whole work—a few mild, "leftish" sallies at the girl's nostalgic preoccupation with the vanished court life of tsarist Russia on the one hand, and the degrading courses inflicted on women by their economic and social dependence in capitalist society on the other.) The rueful irony of the story turns on the fact that the father knows nothing of the son's situation, while the son is ignorant of his rival's identity; the girl is equally unaware of the relationship of the two men, and has, indeed, often pressed her lover to introduce her to his distinguished father. The story ends neatly with the narrator suddenly grasping the situation when he arrives to attend a supper party given by the girl to introduce him to her *fiancé*. He stops short on the threshold of the hotel dining-room, still carrying the portmanteau he is due to deliver to his father (this object is made a sort of symbol of the degrading dependence of an idle, resentful son on a wealthy and arrogant father), and sends a note by hand of the waiter:

> Dear Katushka,
>
> You have asked me to introduce my father to you: he is the one sitting at your table, on your left. You asked me to give you my opinion about the new husband you intend to take: he is a very good husband, and will make you happy.
>
> F.

To the hotel-owner I said: "The portmanteau belongs to the man sitting next to that lady."

Told thus, the story is, of course, commonplace, almost with an element of the farcical, and the general theme has undoubted parallels in European literature: it may be, however, that the most significant parallel is to be found in Persian literature itself, for it is not too fanciful to suggest that we have here a modernized, Freudianized version of the conflict between Sohrāb and Rostam. Nothing is, I feel, more crucial in the story than the father-son antipathy—personal, social, and intellectual —suggested in the opening paragraphs; nothing, incidentally, gives a better picture of the atmosphere of Sally Bowles's Berlin as seen by a young and lonely Oriental:

One particular Sunday morning in July the atmosphere in the city of Berlin was sultry and stifling. In the excessive heat you tossed and turned in bed, the sweat seething off your body, yet you were not prepared to get up from where you lay.

The smoke of the factories and the mists from the woods mingled together, the particles coming through the window into the room, as if they were trying to intensify the pressure already exercised on body and soul. I was studying in Berlin at the time. It was half an hour since the landlord had put my tea on the table, but I didn't feel like getting up. Once or twice, too, he had called through the door: "Sir, you're wanted on the telephone, from your father's house." But I had not answered.

At nine o'clock someone hurriedly knocked on my door and entered the room. At first, thinking it was the landlord again, on some business or other, I paid no attention. But when I suddenly heard my father's voice, I jumped up and said *salām*. He sat in an armchair on one side of the room, took out his gold cigarette-case, lit a cigarette and said: "Why is your room in such a mess? Why don't you collect up these books? Just look: soap, pen, comb, ties, cigarette-holder, hair-net, photographs, and all the rest, all piled on top of one another." The smell of lotion exuding from my father's freshly shaved face made my eyes smart. He was right: his precision and care, his grand manner and his dignity—that dignity he had inherited from his father and grandfather before him, that "camel-like" dignity of his—all that didn't go at all with my confused and disorderly way of life, my nasty mind! In his house there was one drawer for soap, another for cigarettes. There was even a special room for books. . . .

The sting in the tail of this ironical catalogue of self-reproach is too sharp to point further. Nor is there, perhaps, great need to stress the humorous placing of the reference to "studying," or the very Persian touch of the respectful filial greeting. But I cannot close this short review of what is perhaps the neatest story in the book (albeit a little

too cleverly contrived) without emphasizing how remarkable an achievement in Persian is Alavi's use of this economical and unpretentious prose: unlike several others, he has not turned from artificial ornamentation and "correct" *clichés* merely to fall into banality, jargon, bizarre dialectal forms, exaggerated slang, or deliberate obscenity. His style is flexible, but in any given context it is absolutely normal and appropriate. It is more of a tribute than might at first appear to suggest that Alavi's writings offer admirable and virtually self-sufficient material for a practical manual of modern colloquial Persian!

The second story, "The Sacrifice" ("Qorbānī"), is dated at Tehran, April 1933. It tells of Khosrow, a brilliant and cynical young man (though we are given hints of his underlying tragic sincerity and his fundamental worth) who is dying of tuberculosis; for obscure motives (in which, however, selfishness and cruelty certainly have their part) he accepts the devoted love and admiration of a very young girl, Forūgh, whom he eventually marries. On their honeymoon by the Caspian he vanishes, probably committing suicide by drowning, while she is found, stiff with terror, near the open French window leading to the sea. Somewhat disappointingly, Alavi adds the following short postscript to the story (over-emphasis of the point is an ancient failing of Persian narrative): "One year later Forūgh also died of tuberculosis. He was a sacrifice for all, she for him."

The immediate significance of this reference to "sacrifice," as of that in the title, is that Forūgh, on the occasion of the Muslim Feast of Sacrifices, had rashly expressed a desire to be accepted as a sacrifice in her idol's stead; he gloatingly tells the narrator of this and more than once expresses his intention of accepting her offer. Particularly well sustained throughout the story is the narrator's own alarm and hesitation, his uncertainty as to whether his friend is maddened by disease, or merely playing the fool, or carefully planning a course of action in an undisguised spirit of evil.

The story is a difficult one from which to quote effectively, and it might be as well simply to record what are for me some of its main points of interest. In the first place, I find it impossible to escape the impression that the complex character of Khosrow is modelled to a great extent on that of Sadeq Hedayat, the outstanding figure of modern Persian literature to whom I have already made reference; this had struck me very forcibly, even before I was aware of the extent to which Alavi stood under the fascination of Hedayat as a man—a fascination

that has (fortunately, I believe) left rather less of a mark on Alavi as a writer. Both Hedayat and Khosrow have, for example, the same brilliance and subtlety marred only, but effectively, by arrogance and intense selfishness: "Why should I defend myself? . . . I must find space to flap my wings" (p. 29); both have the same wit and flippancy overlying a morbid and uncourageous preoccupation with death: "I realized that Khosrow was also afraid of death, this same Khosrow who had twice so far attempted suicide without dying" (p. 23); there is in both the same fundamental and intellectual contempt for the rest of mankind: "He did not consider people worthy of being spoken to seriously" (p. 20). The list could go on.

Secondly, in this catalogue of points of special interest, there is the best, and so far as I am aware the first, use I know of in Persian literature of the flashback technique. Alavi uses it to great effect, while allowing Khosrow to ramble on about his plans for marrying Forūgh, to fill in essential incidents in the early days of ripening acquaintence among these three persons. Certain passages by Dos Passos are about the nearest parallel I can recall here.

Thirdly, there are the brilliant passages of dialogue between the narrator and Khosrow's simple old mother, who—all unaware of what impends—is chiefly concerned that her son's friend shall persuade him to follow the doctor's advice and drink his medicine! Fourthly, there is the magnificent, detailed description of the lavish and gaudy furnishings with which Khosrow gaily fits out his honeymoon house, with the periodic interjections of the narrator to the effect that "it was not of my taste." Last, there is the restrained portrayal of the unsympathetic role of Forūgh's mother, who—like Katushka's mother in the first story—urges her daughter into the match, in full consciousness of its inadvisability (she herself puts it no higher), because of the distinction she feels it will confer.

The third story, "The Bride of a Thousand Husbands" ("'Arūs-e Hazār Dāmād"), is dated at Tehran, September 1932. The significance of the title is immediately apparent to an educated Persian, who recognizes in it a commonplace pessimistic quotation from the greatest classical poet, Hāfiz:

> Seek not a valid contract from the weak-wayed world,
> For that old hag is the bride of a thousand husbands.[7]

Clearly, we must expect to find someone getting a dirty deal from life!

This story is set in the smoky, noisy, twilit atmosphere of a disreputable Persian night-club, and the central figure is a talented, but shiftless violinist looking back in middle age over the road that has brought him to prostitute his gifts before such an audience. His retrospective musings are given a sort of purpose by his attempts to recapture the memory of his separated wife and of a melody she once sang in the days when they were in love. Though he drinks vodka and cognac (an authentic Persian touch this!) in sporadic bursts throughout his playing, he is essentially the only sober person present: as such, he observes, in an agony of compassion, not only his own downfall but the whole melancholy spectacle of deluded humanity engaged in the pathetic antics of drunken folly. At times he thinks he sees his wife in one of the girls of the place (in fact, the only real point of similarity is in the names, Sūsan and Sūskī; and yet the reader, like the violinist himself, is never really sure—even near the end, where the names appear to interchange—whether or not they are one and the same person metamorphosed by time and experience); and the story reaches a tremendous ballet-like climax, with the violinist and the girl gyrating to a mad, undanceable tune, which is cut short by the singing of the line of Hāfiz mentioned above, and the consequent enraged smashing of his violin by Sūsan (or is it Sūskī?). It is not even clear who really sings the line from Hāfiz' ode, but this is its importance: not only that it sets the keynote for the story, but that it links the two women, the two experiences, the two halves of the musician's life; it is his lost melody, and once he has recaptured it, all tension is eased away.

The crowd effect is superbly managed throughout this story (it is the only one in the book in which the narrator is not personally involved); and, over and above the constant noise and movement, we are offered two very clever punctuations of the violinist's playing and musing (they cease eventually to be real interruptions to these activities): one takes the form of remarks in realistic broken Persian by the fat European proprietress of the establishment, the other is the periodic cacophony of a gramophone that certain customers prefer to the musician's own art. Mounted grotesquely on the spindle of this machine is the symbolic figure of a revolving doll, the word for which in Persian ("little bride," *ʿarūsak*) bears an undoubted relationship to the "bride" of the title (*ʿarūs*). There is something quite terrifying about the sheer pointless idiocy of this gaily dressed, whirling figure in the context and atmosphere of the story.

This is, it will be realized—even from these few comments, and even

by a reader who knows little or nothing of Persian literature—a type of phantasmagoria rarely attempted in the West outside drama or poetry. Some adequate idea of the full range of hints, half-suggestions and allusions could be given only by a complete rendering with heavy annotation. In default of this, the completest passage I can find is the last few paragraphs, which depict the peace after the storm: though superficially in complete contrast to the rest of the story, it draws it together, giving it point and distilling the essence of it. The violinist is left almost alone, contemplating his broken violin:

> From outside came cries of "Sūskī! Sūskī!" Everyone, save for the pianist, had left the room. From the hallway came the voice of the fat woman, arguing with the customers about money.
>
> The musician felt as though his back was broken; gently he bent down and picked the violin up from the floor. The torn strings hung down: like a young man newly fallen in love, who touches his companion's hair, he passed his hand along the strings, caressing them. These strings represented the warp and woof of his life. But one string still remained, one string. . . . This tune that he had forgotten must never slip his mind again. This tune was like that of the first night; that melody of the first night had played with him throughout a whole lifetime. Perhaps it wasn't really a melody, but a mysterious force, hammering his body and soul under massive mace-blows. Whatever it was, it must never again slip his mind. A lifetime had gone to waste: now he must exact revenge . . . with this little old tune . . . little old . . . bride . . . husbands . . . twang!
>
> Three strings had been torn: he struck the remaining string.

Two more points deserve to be mentioned. There is, first, a remarkable long introductory passage, describing the night-club itself, the arrival or the appearance *in situ* of the principal figures, and the preparations for the evening's business—all this without a word spoken or a sound made, as though the scene were being viewed through glass. Secondly, the long-past episodes of the musician's courtship and marriage are beautifully interpolated, not so much this time as flashbacks, but as a series of miniatures set in a sort of *Rahmenerzählung*.

The fourth tale is "The Story of My Room" ("Tārīkhcheh-e Otāq-e Man"), dated at Tehran, November 1934, that is, shortly before the publication of the whole collection. It is a "second-hand" story, in which the narrator, newly and proudly installed in a bed-sitting room (away from the hated paternal roof), elicits from his Armenian landlady Mme Hagopian an account of a series of events culminating in the murder of her favourite son. The murder, be it said at once, did not take place in the narrator's own room, but in a neighbouring one, which has

ever since remained locked and undisturbed, even to the extent that bloody handmarks have not been washed from the walls. The narrator's own room has a history, however, inasmuch as it was once occupied by the strange couple who brought about—the wife indirectly, the husband as immediate agent—the death of the boy Arshāvīr.

The murderer is a German engineer, taken prisoner by the Russians in World War I and subsequently released and allowed to emigrate, with his Russian wife, to Persia. By the time they come to live with Mme Hagopian, Herr Schultz has suffered an accident affecting among other things, his vision. It is clear that his trouble is what might nowadays be termed a psychosomatic disorder, but as Mme Hagopian makes much of the fact that she has never allowed her curiosity to get the better of her politeness in this respect, we never learn for certain exactly what has occurred. The wife (we are, as always, trusting Mme Hagopian in this) is "young, tall, with blue eyes and brown hair; she was not particularly pretty, but she had something that attracted the men. You know, she was always bright and fresh and neat." (P. 54.) They are at first a devoted couple, yet it soon becomes apparent that the husband, more or less tied to his room while his wife earns their livelihood, is inclined to violent moods of bitterness and jealousy. Nevertheless, he urges his wife from time to time to go out, alone or with other people, even with the young man Arshāvīr; at such times particularly, he likes to be read to by the other son, Ardāshes (his favourite author is Dostoievsky, and the Armenian family are familiar with Russian as well as Persian). As time passes, matters become worse: the husband grows more jealous and savage, the wife spends more time away from home. There are periodic reconciliations, Mme Hagopian (who is, of course, a Christian) doing her best with cheerful, or intendedly cheerful, Christmas and New Year's parties. It is a New Year's party that precipitates the final tragedy: when the party fails pathetically to "go," Frau Schultz and the boy go out together at the husband's suggestion, while he insists on being read a story by Schnitzler about a cuckolded but forbearing professor.[8] Suddenly he cuts the reading short and broods awhile; equally without warning, he dashes upstairs, where he finds, and shoots, his wife and the boy in the latter's room. When he is discovered, his sight has been restored, but he has no wish to see.

Alavi performs a veritable *tour de force* with this story by keeping it moving against Mme. Hagopian's fundamental reluctance to tell it. Mme. Hagopian is no stock figure in the tradition of gossipy landladies unloading their life history on unwilling lodgers: she remains a genuine

person, with dignity and subtlety of character, and this even in spite of the realistic, but slightly comic, touch of her Armenianized Persian (roughly a sort of equivalent to Welsh-tinged English). Here is one of her typical passages (p. 59), describing her own anxiety about the deterioration in relations between the husband and wife, and also about what she suspects to be the reason for it:

"Monsieur Schultz was feeling badly, and would not eat his food. Madame Schultz no longer brushed back the locks of her husband's hair that fell across his forehead. Only once did she hand him the serviette to wipe his mouth, whereas at other times she herself used to perform this task. But I, poor thing, was not to blame. The worst thing is that we mothers fancy that we are nearer than anyone to our own children, while it is not so. A mother is stranger than anyone to her children. Children will tell their friends a thousand things, not one of which will they tell their mother. Neither Arshāvīr nor Ardāshes told me a single word about what had happened between them. I beg you to consider: what can a person do in such a case?"

Here again is Mme. Hagopian (p. 65), refusing to give way to returning grief, and leading up to the tragic denouement with all the circumstantial details of a thoroughly objective report. She had left Ardāshes (who knew of his brother's intrigue with Frau Schultz) to keep the blindman company while she prepared a hot New Year's drink in the kitchen:

"Whether Ardāshes then told Monsieur Schultz that they were in that room, I don't know. I was busy in the kitchen preparing *grog*. This is a drink the Germans are very fond of, especially on New Year's Eve. They mix together red wine, a little rum, loaf sugar, and cinnamon and cloves, then boil it up and drink it. There I was, lost in my work, when I noticed Monsieur Schultz's voice suddenly raised. Doors slammed, and he left the room at a run. First he went to his own room, but not groping his way along the wall—no, he was running! I didn't know what to make of it. Suddenly I heard a dreadful noise: Schultz had fired three shots, one after the other, in Arshāvīr's room. When I entered the room, I saw my son and Madame Schultz lying on the ground. . . ."

As a final skilful touch, it may be noticed that it is only at the very last that poor, respectable Mme Hagopian drops the careful, if inappropriate, "Monsieur" from the surname of her son's murderer.

The fifth story, "The Lead Soldier" ("Sarbāz-e Sorbī"), is dated at Tehran, in December 1934, even closer to the date of final publication than was the last. It is probably the most ingenious, the best constructed, and the most wholly Persian story in the entire collection. Apart from the

bus journeys that begin and end it, there is no obtrusion at any point of European characters or of any outward signs of a Western way of life; moreover, it deals, unlike (for example) "The Sacrifice," with humble, unintellectual folk, people virtually free from any trace of cosmopolitan influence.

Basically, it is the tale of a derelict, minor government employee, F., who has lost his post through absenteeism and excessive opium smoking. (Moderate opium smoking is widespread in Persia, permitted but officially discouraged. It thus stands very much in the case of alcohol consumption in many Western countries.) He blames his misfortune partly on his father (whom he hates as having ill-treated and humiliated his beloved mother), but more directly on a servant-girl, Kowkab; she had originally inflicted herself on him against his own inclinations, but eventually he came more or less to love her as a mother-substitute. She, in her turn, has a fetishistic obsession with a lead soldier, who from one point of view represents the husband she has lost by lengthy absence on military service (it is this lead soldier which, when it itself becomes lost, leads the opium addict to try making such toys, first to pacify Kowkab and then as a means of eking out a meagre livelihood); nevertheless, she is quite prepared, at least for a time, to try to lead something of a normal married life with F., though not merely to take the place of his mother. In mutual frustration, their dull dislike of each other grows, and they repeatedly separate, only to come together again and again, each dragging the other deeper into degradation. Finally, it is very obviously suggested, he strangles her. His own fate remains uncertain, and we never discover for sure whether the man at the end, whose case of lead solders spills open as he tries to board a bus, is the fleeing murderer or a thief who has stolen the murderer's stock-in-trade.

The power and ingenuity of the story derive mainly from four sources. First, there is the opium addict's own rambling account—a masterpiece of observation, on Alavi's part, of the thought processes and speech habits of these people; this feature is marred only, if at all, by the passages inserted at intervals, somewhat artificially, to break up the weight of the narrative. Next, we are given a second version of the same story by the girl Kowkab, with, of course, a totally different emphasis; in her own way, and in her animal boorishness, she is every bit as demented and incoherent as F. Thirdly, we have crucial points confirmed or contradicted by such normal, "reliable" outsiders as F.'s sister (a gaunt, unattractive spinster with a rather primitive type of religious

zealotry) or the water-controller for the district. (This functionary, now gradually becoming redundant as piped supplies are introduced, regulates the flow of water from the snow-covered mountains in its passage along the gutters of Persian streets. In this capacity, he is a well-known, and needs to be a trusted, personality in his particular district. Much of his work is done at night, when the gutters are less impeded, and when quarrels between conflicting claimants are less likely to break out, hence the value of his evidence on F.'s nocturnal habits.) Lastly, we have the fantastic nocturnal prowlings of F. (and of the narrator on his trail) through the quiet, yet living, moonlight and shadow of the less reputable quarters of an Oriental city.

This story contains a wealth of quotable passages, of which the following represent some very inadequate samples:

> Some time passed and I did not see F. again: I was at that time a member of the department of opium excise and they had posted me to Fasā. Then I fell ill, returned, and was for a time unemployed. On coming back from a trip, about two years later, I went to see F., the pretext being that one of the tax officials at Fasā used to know him, and had asked me to take him a quantity of opium. . . . He prepared a brazier and we spread a rug together in the garden and sat down. The talk turned on that woman. Then he related his story to me, at first somewhat unwillingly, but when he saw that I had no ulterior motive, he got more of a move on. But it was all unsystematic. . . . Opium smokers have a special way of speaking. They will start a sentence, and then half clamp down, so that the sentence is never finished. The listener needs to be patient and not be put off by the sizzling of the opium. Something that makes the talk of these opium addicts agreeable, however, is the sweet, soft sound of their voice. [Pages 68–9, with omissions.]

Here is F. describing the first step in his downfall (pp. 70–1):

> "When I was in Bushire I used not to smoke opium. Later I became an opium addict. Just about that time my mother had recently died: a shiver still comes over me when I remember it. She loved me too: even when I was sixteen, unless she would put her hand in mine, I could not go to sleep. These are not things that everyone can understand. In Bushire . . . yes, in Bushire I lived in the house of my department-head—poor devil, he's now in jail on a charge of opium smuggling! The reason for it all was that I had something of a voice, having learned to recite the Koran with my father. Now this head of department was a man of discriminating taste: every evening he would collect all the 'boys' together, *'araq* and wine were set out, and our party got going. You must, however, realize that until that time I had never drunk *'araq*. . . . "

Here is F., again, with a nightmare, in which father, mother, and lead soldier (now elevated in rank) all play their symbolic part (p. 75):

"I remember I had a dream in which an officer with a naked sword was making an attack on my mother. My father was standing there, saying nothing. But the reason for it was that in those days I was drinking too much *ʿaraq*."

And here is the final paragraph:

Next day the weather was extremely cold. Snow had covered the entire city. When I came out of the office, I went to see my friend in the Avenue Esmāʿīl Bazzāz. The door of the house was locked and sealed with wax. [This is normal Persian police procedure where a house is still under examination as the scene of a serious crime.] For a while I walked up and down the road, then I went to the Shāh Square, where I got on a bus to go home. In the bus people were saying that on the previous night a man had strangled a woman. Near Dardār Street a man was standing, holding a case and scratching the back of his neck. The driver's mate hadn't noticed this passenger, and the driver himself stopped the bus and said to his mate: "Come on, get that ten shāhīs-worth off the road!" The man who was scratching his neck put his hand in his pocket as if to look for his money. As he came to mount the bus, his case hit the running-board; the lid opened and an enormous quantity of lead soldiers poured out on the snow. The driver would not wait any longer, and started the bus moving. The man who had been scratching his neck gathered the soldiers together, picked up his case and shouted "Stop!"; but the driver paid no attention. Only his mate said: "Get along, you pimp! You think it's fun to make yourself a nuisance to other people."

The crude, hearty normality of this scene (whatever its undertones) takes us back to the opening paragraphs, which are set in very similar circumstances. It is as though the terrible story which intervenes between the two had never been told. As the narrator himself says at the beginning of the story, to the bus driver (especially the Tehran bus driver of those days, scratching a living by his alertness and resourcefulness) every person is reduced and simplified to a potential ten shāhīs-worth of fare.

The last story, which bears the same date of composition as the fifth, is not really a story at all, but a satirical essay. "The Man in the Stylish Overcoat" ("Mardī-keh Pāltō-ye Shīk Tanesh Būd") owes, despite the echo in the title, nothing whatsoever to Gogol or his many later imitators. It tells of a Persian dandy and dilettante, Mr. Navāpūr, who pontificates on clothes, manners, and morals to an admiring circle of friends and hangers-on, until he is eventually persuaded by a mischievous bystander to enshrine his observations in printed form. The narrator hears nothing

but this article being discussed wherever he goes (there is good satire here on the various points of view taken up over the article by differing factions of modern Persian thought, each school viewing it not *per se* but in the light of their own particular interest, however irrelevant); but for a long time he is unable to procure a copy. When he finally does obtain one, he discovers not only that the article is feeble and commonplace, but that it contains a blatant piece of "commercial" writing in favour of a local tailor. There is more than a hint that, despite his vaunted breeding, his good taste, and his enlightened views, Mr. Navāpūr has taken a bribe.

Perhaps the funniest aspect of this essay, however, is the way in which the narrator sustains throughout the rôle of a sort of Candide, well disposed to believe all he is told about the man's greatness and only slowly, and unwillingly, revealing the doubts that begin to beset him. Here is how the tale begins:

> "Don't you know Mr. Navāpūr? He's one of those fine young men, modern, enlightened, and of discriminating taste. I do assure you, he is extremely erudite and learned, and possessed of all virtues, both natural and acquired. What can I say of the nobility of his family? All the approved qualities, all praiseworthy characteristics are united in them."
>
> Thus was Mr. Navāpūr presented to me, and your humble servant, the writer of these lines, cannot but affirm and allow that he is in fact possessed of all the aforementioned characteristics. . . .

The irony of this introduction is heightened for the Persian reader by the fact that the style is a gentle, deliberately inexpert, parody of the classical style used in panegyrics. It is, in fact, just how a third-rate journalist might seek to curry favour with someone he conceived to be important and influential.

Here is the satire becoming broader (p. 97), as Mr. Navāpūr's gaffes become too gross to blink away (he has been making great play with the names of world-famous men):

> Your humble servant, the writer of these lines, had heard the name of Edison from the pulpit of Shaikh Chālmaidānī [a comic-sounding fabrication in Persian: it could be variously rendered "Hollow-square" or "Know-nothing," according to vocalization], who is one of Persia's most eminent scholars and scientists, and I knew what service he had rendered to the world of humanity. But I had not heard the name of Darwin, and accordingly I asked Mr. Navāpūr who he might be. He graciously told me that Darwin was the great inventor who had devised a machine by which, using electricity, he could turn monkeys into men.

Unfortunately, some of the best passages in the story would need to be quoted at considerable length, and with much annotation, if their general flavour and their finer points were to be adequately brought out. This is particularly true of the views on the article professed by the various schools of thought mentioned above. There is the conservative literary clique, who admire the article but regret that it does not contain more references to the classics, especially the Arabic classics; another is hurt by Mr. Navāpūr's use of words of Arabic derivation, where good Persian words exist or could be resuscitated (even though the Arabic word might need to be inserted in a footnote, to guide the reader as to the "genuine" Persian word's meaning!); there is the preacher who, while admiring the article as an influential and important piece of work, is uneasily conscious that religion tends to dwell on prayer and penance and the avoidance of ostentation and luxury. But all these different groups manage to find their own way through the open door of *ma'hāzā*, "nevertheless," to an enthusiastic admiration. There is a moral here, perhaps, that applies beyond the frontiers of Persia, for there are other societies where critics, finding it difficult or distasteful to persist in standing against a popular drift, are eventually able to reconcile their conscience on the one hand with almost anything else on the other.

The world of modern Persia, as depicted and, often unconsciously, revealed by a writer such as Bozorg Alavi, has, it will immediately be sensed, a great deal in common with nineteenth-century Russia. This is true not only of the physical world, but of the world of the mind and the imagination also. Brutality, arbitrary violence, sentimentality, and a thirst for justice go hand in hand. Extreme sophistication consorts with an embarrassing naïveté. A Western observer, however well trained and however sympathetic, is often at a loss to understand the motivations involved, or to decide where compassion ends and self-pity begins. Indeed, while he cannot, and must not, wholly reject his own categories, he eventually becomes aware that they may have only a limited validity in the situation he has chosen to observe. But it is for such as the Persians themselves to work out the ultimate terms of the synthesis now demanded: when the conflict, between the consciousness of ancient and abiding national worth and the sense of material and intellectual backwardness, has been resolved; when the perpetual clutching at new ideas and new experiences has been succeeded by some degree of *blasé* self-confidence, even satiety—then Persian literature may once again be a world phenomenon. Meanwhile, as these samples may show, it has even now more force than the West might suspect.

NOTES

1 It is interesting, even somewhat startling, to note that, especially in the present century, North and South America have produced Arabic-speaking men of letters no less eminent than those of Cairo and Alexandria, Beirut and Damascus, Baghdad, and the North African cities. Cf. the series of articles on this subject by Sir Hamilton Gibb, published in the University of London's *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* in the years 1923, 1929, and 1933. For some samples of modern poetry culled, rather thinly, from all over the Arabic-speaking world and translated by A. J. Arberry, see *Modern Arabic Poetry: An Anthology with English Verse Translations* ("Cambridge Oriental Series," No. 1; London, 1950). Of prose works a few items by Tāhā Husain and Taufīq Hakīm represent virtually all that has been translated into English so far, and only a little more is available in French.

2 I may, perhaps, draw attention to my suggestion of at least one fundamental reason for this phenomenon: see my article on "Religion" in A. J. Arberry, ed., *The Legacy of Persia*, (Oxford, 1953), p. 154, n. 1; and my article on "The Persian Conception of Artistic Unity and Its Implications in Other Fields," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, XIV (1952), 239–44.

3 A shrewd and informative little survey of the field in general, albeit spoilt somewhat by haste and inaccuracy, has been made by my former pupil and recent successor at the University of Cambridge P. W. Avery, in "Developments in Modern Persian Prose," *Muslim World*, XLV (1955), 313–23.

4 P. W. Avery's article (see note 3 above) has a few remarks on Alavi (p. 322), which, as far as they go, are in general agreement with my own observations. He adds, however, the information that Alavi is particularly interested in "Virginia Woolf, Henry James and Proust."

5 The word *chamadān* is an interesting example of the "back-borrowing" process that often occurs between Persian on the one hand and Arabic and Turkish on the other; here, exceptionally, the other language involved is Russian, which normally serves only as the transmitter to Persian of French and other European terms (cf. *pāltō* in the title of the last story discussed, and a word like *belīt* for "ticket"). *Jāmeh-dān* is a Persian compound meaning literally "clothes-holder," and it is still in use in Persian in the sense of "clothes-cupboard or "wardrobe"; it was borrowed into Russian as *chemo(a)dān* and is nowadays a common word in that language for "suitcase, trunk, etc." In this sense, and with approximately the same pronunciation, it has returned to Persian. P. W. Avery's reference to the title as *The Suitcase* (see note 3 above) seems rather to miss the point of Alavi's double use of the word here.

6 Given the limitations of space on the present article and the sense of my remarks in the introductory section, it is, I hope, unnecessary to offer any lengthy explanation for the decision to try and display the essential features of modern Persian literature through one writer and one *genre*, in a single book and that his earliest.

7 No. 37 in the latest standard edition, that of Muhammad Qazvīnī and Qāsim Ghanī, Tehran 1320 solar (i.e. 1941 A.D.).

8 Presumably "Die Frau des Weisen," first published 1896.

AN EXPATRIATE IN BOSTON

Austin Warren

In America today there are few readers of poetry, and fewer still with leisure for poets not our contemporaries. These few may well be advised to spend their days and nights with Homer, Virgil, and Shakespeare—the inexhaustible. Unless one is an antiquarian who prizes objects the more in proportion to their rarity—why bother with minor writers who are, by definition, strictly irrelevant to the current scene and mind?

One motive is that of the literary historian, for whom a minor writer is often more efficient than a major one, because characteristic of his age—less a "hero" than a "representative man." Another is that of the psychologist of art, curious to discover (if he can) the pattern of failure: why, whether by default of character, or deficiency of talent, or maladjustment to context, a writer lacked the one thing needful. Yet another is that of the critic, whom the "minor" and the "bad" persistently spur to the definition of excellence. And finally there is that special kind of temperament exemplified by Louise Imogen Guiney, who cherished a fond affection for small or incompletely realized poets such as Mangan and Lionel Johnson, Alabaster, and the "matchless Orinda"; who "was always listening, the generous hand to the responsive ear, to echoes from 'forgotten or infrequent lyres,' " and for whom the least line or image of true poetry was too precious for oblivion.

To all of these interests, the story of Thomas W. Parsons (1819–1892) has something to offer. His early years belong to New England's Golden Day; his latter to the Gilded, that age when the prophetic Concord and the didactic Cambridge disappeared; when art and religion had become separated from the conduct of business and politics. By virtue of his Anglophilism and Anglocatholicism, Parsons was an alien to the place in which he lived; and his devotion to Dante alienated him from his time. His own poetry, too, had its affiliation with vanished or

vanishing idioms: in his satires, his theory of translation, and his lyric style, he was a poetic "non-juror," a conscientious survival from an earlier day, the late eighteenth century, when sentimental and neoclassic impulses held each other in check.

Parsons was born at Boston in 1819, the birth-year of Lowell, of Melville, and of Whitman; he was ten years the junior of Holmes and Poe, twelve years the junior of Longfellow and Whittier. The poet's father, after whom he was named, was an Englishman who emigrated to New England and, after taking an M.D. at Harvard, practised medicine and dentistry. The family lived on Winter Street in Boston; worshipped at Trinity Church, then occupying, in its massive brick Gothic, the corner of Summer and Hawley Streets.

In 1828, the son entered the Boston Latin School; and here, excelling in the classical languages, he tried his hand at translating Horace into English verse. For some reason, now unknown, he was not sent to Harvard: the substitute was a European journey, upon which, in 1836, his father conducted him. The ship which bore the Parsonses to Italy landed them on the island of Malta, where, in the course of a fortnight, the seventeen-year-old youth had his first perception of a world antithetic to the neat, shadowless land of the Yankee—a world of poverty, horror, age, and art.

For young Parsons, Florence proved the memorable city. Accidentally meeting Signora Guiseppa Danti, he lodged with her during his stay; and, long after, he recalled: "There, in the venerable Borgo Sant' Apostolo, consecrated, in my imagination by a verse of Dante's, in the ancient House of the Acciaiuoli, and in the home of a learned lady who bore the name of the poet, I became enamoured of the Divina Commedia." He first became acquainted with Dante from the *Paradiso*; he memorized it and declaimed it as he walked the streets of Florence. The sights, sounds, and odours of Italy quickened his sensibility; and Italy offered, in her art and poetry, the instigation of a personal culture not incoherent but centred.

In Boston once again, he commenced to study medicine at Harvard; but he did not complete his course and, though in later life he was styled "Dr." Parsons, held no degree until Harvard, in 1853, through the kind offices of Professor Andrews Norton, conferred upon him an honorary M.A. For some time, it seems, he practised dentistry—Norton's son Charles Eliot Norton, writing in 1855, is the most authentic witness; of profession or livelihood Parsons makes, in his own letters,

no mention. In 1857, he married Hannah Allen, who had privately printed, often without her husband's knowledge, the many small volumes of his poetry which make him of interest to collectors.

Parsons made at least two other journeys to Europe. He passed the year 1847 in Italy; at Rome he made the friendship of the sculptor Thomas Crawford, whom he accompanied upon long rambles and with whom he spent long evenings of wine and conversation. During the same journey, he visited Naples, Sorrento, Capri, Salerno, Pompeii, and Calabria. To one of his literary scholarship and taste, the drive from Salerno recalled the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics*:

> Here everything is quite Vergilian—shepherds with their flocks—a Meliboeus under every beech—farmers that seem to have never change of fashion either in dress or village. We stopped at a farmhouse where some peasants were feeding on garlick and bacon—the hut filled with smoke as in Augustan days. . . .

The sight of Paestum evoked Hellenic antiquity:

> I have never seen a more solemn spot—the ruins are less beautiful perhaps than some in Rome but they are of a wholly different aspect—the look of age is immense compared with those in the Forum. Two are less elegant in proportion than the others and seem to be of an age before the Doric had been much improved on. . . . You can fancy the inhabitants of this early city of Magna Grecia—Posidonia—looking with contempt on the people of upstart Athens and their new fangled notions about architecture. . . .

His father's England was for Parsons, probably even more than nineteenth-century Italy, the congenial setting. In 1871–2, for fourteen months, he lived in London more in accord with his surroundings than ever before or afterward. He described to a Bostonian his content with the "peaceful pastoral way of life in serene Pall Mall where I see nothing more exciting than the figure, occasionally, of Mr. Gladstone emerging from the hawthorns of the gardens, opposite, of Carlton House Terrace . . . or the Archbishop of York or other estray dignitary of the Church. . . . After such quiet people I am somewhat dreading the rough and tumble of Winter Street." It was with reluctance that Parsons came "home." There can be little doubt that, had family responsibilities permitted, he would permanently have lived abroad—in Italy, like W. W. Story, or, like Henry James, in England.

He had to the full the English feeling for the country, and when in Boston, spent as much time as possible in the quiet villages nearby. In the 1850's, the Wayside Inn at Sudbury, owned and operated by two bachelor brothers, offered a retreat for rusticating poets and scholars.

In the prelude to his *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (1863), Longfellow characterized its chief frequenters: Henry Wales, in commemoration of whom Parsons wrote "A Dirge," is the "Student"; Daniel Treadwell, Parsons' "best and earliest friend" and Rumford Professor at Harvard, is the "Theologian"; the "Sicilian" is Luigi Monti, instructor in Italian under Professor Longfellow and then husband of Parsons' sister Fanny; Parsons himself is Longfellow's "Poet,"

> whose verse
> Was tender, musical, and terse;
> The inspiration, the delight,
> The gleam, the glory, the swift flight
> Of thoughts so sudden, that they seem
> The revelations of a dream,
> All these were his; but with them came
> No envy of another's fame. . . .
>
> Honor and blessings on his head
> While living, good report when dead,
> Who, not too eager for renown,
> *Accepts, but does not clutch, the crown.*

For general society he had little taste: though, from his youth, he had the acquaintance and respect of Lowell, Longfellow, Norton, Emerson, and Holmes, he was not their intimate; and, though a contributor to the *Atlantic*, he was never a member of the Saturday Club. After his return from England, he withdrew more and more into his sanctuaries—the country, the classics, the translation of Dante, religious contemplation. The city became emblematic of all that dulls and dizzies, of the confused, confusing, and purposeless.

> Cherish thy muse! for life hath little more,
> Save what we hold in common with the herd:
> O blessing of these woods! to walk unstirred
> By clash of commerce and the city's roar!
> What finds the scholar in those flaming walls
> But wearied people hurrying to and fro,
> Most with too high, and many without aim,
> Crowded in vans or sweltering in huge halls
> To hear loud emptiness or see the show?
> Were this a life to "scape the Muses" blame?
> Rather than such would I the Parcae ask,
> Folding mine arms, to stretch me on the floor
> Where Agamemnon in his golden mask
> Dreams not of Argolis or Argos more.
>
> ("To a Poet in the City")

His literary culture was wide and fine. French, Italian, and Latin he wrote with ease, retaining into old age his skill at Latin verse. If he translated from Michelangelo, Chiabrera, and Manzoni, his familiar letters show his intimacy with Homer, Virgil, and Horace.

Christian humanist, Parsons confirmed by mature assent his baptism into "the Church." Though an Episcopalian, he was, wrote his friend Louise Chandler Moulton, "as nearly a Roman Catholic as he well could be without absolutely stepping over the dividing line." Since he appears never to have come under the influence of Newman, Pusey, and their fellows, his High Anglicanism must have been self-initiated—his own mediation between England and Italy, the Prayer Book and Dante: and in a sonnet, "Turning from Darwin to Aquinas," he rejects the modern thinker for the mediaeval.

For nearly a hundred years, Cambridge has been a place where men have studied Dante. At Harvard College, Ticknor, Longfellow, Lowell, Norton, Grandgent, and Singleton have in succession lectured on, edited, and translated the poet; and there Santayana wrote his study of Dante as a philosophical poet. The Cambridge Dante Society, established in 1881 under the presidency of Longfellow, and including cultivated Bostonians such as Parsons and Howells as well as professors, was the first of its kind in America. In 1893, Charles Norton could fairly call Longfellow, Lowell, and Parsons "the three most eminent lovers and disciples of Dante in America; three poets who had each devoted a large portion of his life to the study of Dante's work, and contributed as no other scholars have done to diffuse his influence in this country."

For Parsons, Dante was pre-eminently the "signor dell' altissimo canto." Like Pound and Eliot, Parsons could give no comparable rank to the heretic Milton. In 1843, he issued privately *The First Ten Cantos of the Inferno*. With *terza rima* he had earlier experimented, only to reject it as a "form foreign to our language"; and, though blank verse had been used in 1812 by Cary, the most popular translator of the *Commedia*, Parsons judged it incapable of Dante's "musical severity." The form which he decided upon, the heroic quatrain, he defended as "our measure nearest to the Italian, and the measure of Gray's 'Elegy,' which already has possession of the English ear, and must adorn it forever."

The 1843 translation was followed by a critical essay illustrated by Parsons' reading in six literatures and so written as to make one regret that so little such prose was to follow. Having delineated, with insight, Dante's character and poetic sovereignty, Parsons declared the spirit in

which he approached his own discipline. "To render him properly requires, in short, somewhat of Dante's own moods: it needs time and toil. Fasting and solitude might not be amiss."

The *Dial* favourably reviewed the little volume; Cary sent a letter of encouragement; and Professor Andrews Norton, literary pontiff of Cambridge, urged Parsons to proceed. Yet twenty-two years passed; and when, in 1865, the six hundredth anniversary of Dante's birth required homage, Parsons had still but seventeen cantos to send, in a privately printed brochure, to Florence. Two years later, however—almost concurrently with Norton's prose translation of the *Vita Nuova* and Longfellow's blank-verse *Commedia*—Parsons published his complete *Inferno*.

Although Parsons hoped to complete his *Purgatorio* for publication in 1872, one who had spent twenty-five years on the *Inferno* was not to progress through the second Canticle more rapidly. But he had pleasure in reading a long eulogy of his *Inferno*, which appeared in the *Catholic World* for November 1868, probably from the pen of the editor Fr. Isaac Hecker (a member of Brook Farm before he became a Catholic and the founder of the Paulist order). The reviewer pronounced Parsons' work "What, after a close and careful study, we deem the best of all translations of Dante." Encouraged by this appreciation, Parsons thereafter contributed to the *World*, at irregular intervals, instalments of his translation.

In 1876 appeared *The Ante-Purgatorio* (the eight preliminary cantos). "In perusing this version," Parsons prefatorily wrote, ". . . the reader may profitably direct his attention less to any dogma of the Church . . . than to the allegorical sense of the poet, founded, as it must be acknowledged by all Christian believers, upon the facts of our own nature and the history of the human heart. The 'Roman doctrine concerning Purgatory' may be combatted as an article of faith, but must be admitted as a true statement of the condition of mankind religiously considered. . . ."

At his death, he left a "Purgatorio" completed through the twenty-second canto as well as fragments of the "Paradiso." He often sent manuscript or proof-sheets for the criticism of Lowell and Norton, carefully pondering their strictures. Even after publication, he continued to revise. The study of Dante, employing his scholarship and taste, was, for him, also an act of devotion; each manuscript page bears the sign of the cross; on the same pages there often appear Latin invocations of Dante's theological master St. Thomas.

His standards were rigorous; his patience, unwearying. "Let no man," he once said, "approach Dante's temple who is not master of his time." To a publisher attempting to hasten him, he replied, "I expect to be a

student of Dante through all eternity, and therefore I cannot afford to be hurried by the exigencies of your house." His *obiter dicta* assume the same high tone: "Even in this democratic country we must bear to remember that Dante is of all poets the most aristocratic in that he requires absolute allegiance."

When successive instalments of his translations appeared, they were received, always respectfully, by his fellow Dantists Lowell, Norton, and Howells. Yet—while they had a real regard for Parsons as a man, scholar, and poet—his conception of his task differed radically from theirs.

To convey into another language both the "prose sense" of a poem and its style and, at the same time, to make the translation read like an original English poem is manifestly impossible. According to the Renaissance and neoclassical theory, exemplified in Pope's Homer and Dryden's Virgil and Juvenal, the substance of the foreign poem should be assimilated and then reworked in a fashion which should, for "beauties" lost in transit from one language to another, substitute new "beauties" appropriate to the translator's tongue and genius. Against this theory of free or "creative" translation, the nineteenth century revolted, arguing that, since poetic style cannot really be reproduced in another tongue, it is of chief importance to paraphrase closely, either in unrhymed verse or in prose: the theory makes prose the really logical choice.

Longfellow and his friends rejected Cary's Dante as Miltonic rather than Dantesque; and Parsons' version seemed to them another unevenly brilliant instance of the old, mistaken method—a translation in tone—and style—alien to the original, as though the translator said, "I too am a poet."

The distinction between theories can be illustrated by paralleling Dante, Longfellow, and Parsons at the end of the second canto of the *Purgatorio*. Casella has been singing.

lo mio maestro ed io quella gente
ch'eran con lui parevan si contenti,
come a nessun toccasse altro la mente.

noi eravam tutti fissi ed attenti
alle sue note; ed ecco il veglio onesto,
gridando: "Che e cio, spirite lenti?

"qual negligenza, quale stare e questo?
Correte al monte a spogliarvi lo scoglio,
ch'esser non lascia a voi Dio manifesto."

My master and myself and all that people
Which with him were, appeared as satisfied
As if naught else might touch the mind of any.

We all of us were motionless and attentive
Unto his notes; and lo! the grave old man,
Exclaiming: "What is this, ye laggard spirits?

"What negligence, what standing still is this?
Run to the mountain to strip off the slough,
That lets not God be manifest to you."

We stood, my Master and myself, as though
Nought else possessed us, and that shadowy swarm,
Rapt, listening round him to his notes; and lo!
That noble old man's venerable form

Came crying: "How now, tardy spirits? why
This negligence? Why lingering do you plod?
Run to the mountain, that from every eye
The scales may fall that seal your sight from God."

Longfellow translated line by line. Parsons, collecting the sense, rearranged it, reducing nine verses to eight. He felt free to alter and to add: accordingly, "That people which were with him" becomes a "shadowy swarm"; the dignity of Cato, "grave old man," is augmented by "venerable form." To the final lines of Dante's third tercet he gave, though with a hint from the alliteration of "spogliarvi io scoglio," a rhetorical cadence unwarranted by his original. Parsons' heroic quatrain is a noble adaptation. Dryden and Gray, from whom he took it, customarily treat each stanza as a disjunct unit; Parsons not only avoids the dominance of the end-stopped line but enjambs his quatrains, so that the effect produced is an approximate equivalent to the continuity of the *terza rima.*

Since the days of Longfellow and Parsons, new translations of Dante have multiplied. While to the Cambridge men and their friends, prose or blank verse seemed to be the necessary medium, English scholars contemporary with them—such as Cayley, Minchin, and Haselfoot—attempted line-for-line versions in *terza rima.* These efforts have been variously unsatisfactory—cramped and crabbed in style, the diction sometimes dictated by the rhyme scheme; but it is their pattern, rather than that of Longfellow or Norton, which has won the emulation of subsequent translators such as Plumptre, Grandgent, Anderson, and, with modification, Fletcher; and the versions of Plumptre and Grand-

gent (the latter, fragmentary) offer a closer union of Dante's doctrine and aesthetic discipline, of fidelity to the Italian and satisfaction to the English reader, than their predecessors.

As a poet, not alone a poetic translator, Parsons began early to make a name in the literary periodicals of Boston and New York. "On a Bust of Dante," his best-known poem and still a masterpiece, first appeared in the Boston *Advertiser* for October 7, 1841.

> See, from this counterfeit of him
> Whom Arno shall remember long,
> How stern of lineament, how grim,
> The father was of Tuscan song:
> There but the burning sense of wrong,
> Perpetual care and scorn abide;
> Small friendship for the lordly throng;
> Distrust of all the world beside. . . .

The force and dignity of the ode were almost immediately recognized. Six years later, Longfellow included it in *The Estray: A Collection of English and American Poems*; and it has, since then, had persistent place in anthologies. When, by the publisher James T. Fields, it was called to the attention of the English Mary Russell Mitford, close and enthusiastic follower of American literature, she acclaimed it as "by very far the finest stanzas that ever left America. . . . There is no doubt that Dr. Parsons will be the great poet of America if his life be spared."

In 1843, the *Knickerbocker* introduced Parsons as a satirist. Under the incognito of an English traveller in "the States," dispatching verse epistles to his friends at home, he first addressed the London poet Samuel Rogers—for whom, with sharp epithets, he delineated the barbarities of America: "the savage tribes of Illinois"; the "tap-room statesmen's never-ending rant"; the effrontery of Cockney journalists and lecturers who, despised in London, affect in America the style of gentlemen; Peck, the "Pindar of the Sucker State" of Arkansas; the joyless thrift, the careworn faces, and premature old age. In succeeding issues, Parsons similarly addressed Carlyle, Edward Moxon (the publisher), Landor, and Charles Kemble.

The satires allowed Parsons vent for all of his spleens and distastes—Puritan morals, the exaltation of the mercantile, modern inventions and illusions. Ridiculing at length Boston's aversion to the drama, he held up to particular scorn the transformation (in 1843) of the Tre-

mont Theatre into Tremont (Baptist) Temple, "half chapel and half shop." The nineteenth century he christened the age "of steam and prose"; "this bargain-making tribe" was his epithet for Yankees.

The first collected edition of Parsons' poems, reprinting all but one of these epistles, added a preface explanatory of his intention:

> What was their drift?—A whim, without a plan,
> To feign myself a wandering Englishman:
> To imagine how he felt, and what he thought;
> How we had felt, perchance, if English taught:
> Had we at Harrow or at Eton learned
> That fine freemasonry that is not earned
> By bookish toil in colleges at home,
> Nor all the schools from Gottingen to Rome:
> Something fastidious—call it, if you will,
> Insular pride,—but something genial still. . . .

In their praise of English culture, urbanity, and poise, these lines offer the positive ideal by which the satirist has judged his fellow countrymen, and offer confirmation rather than retraction of the satires; but in the concluding paragraph, hopeful that America may one day attain a respite from whirling "progress," Parsons prophesies what has already become fact:

> Such as to us—a consecrated stream—
> Isis hath been, our little Charles may seem!
> In Harvard's names, that now so humbly sound,
> St. John's and Pembroke may by then be found
> And what old England is to you and me,
> Such may New England to Nebraska be!

During his appearance in the New York *Knickerbocker*—under Willis Clark's editorship perhaps the best known literary magazine of its time—Parsons contributed verse and prose to a brilliant pair of Boston periodical ventures: the *Boston Miscellany of Literature and Fiction,* edited by Nathan Hale, Jr., which ran its brief course during 1842; and the *Pioneer,* a "little magazine," three numbers of which were issued in 1843 under the direction of Russell Lowell and his friend Robert Carter. The once "authoritative" *Atlantic Monthly* made its debut in 1857 under Lowell's editorship. Although Parsons did not appear in the first number with Emerson and Holmes, and was never among its featured contributors, his "Sculptor's Funeral" was published in the first volume of the new monthly; and, between 1857 and his

death in 1892, twenty-five other poems of his followed. The New York *Galaxy,* begun nearly a decade after the *Atlantic,* brought Parsons into the company of his juniors: in the first volume, a translation of his appeared beside the poetry of Stedman and Stoddard and the prose of Howells and James.

Parsons' life as a poet spanned three generations of literary Bostonions. The elder Richard Henry Dana, contemporary of Bryant, Irving, and Cooper, and himself author of the once celebrated "Buccaneer," commended Parsons. The illustrious of the Golden Age were his friends. And when, after the Civil War, a new generation of "artists" began to appear in the *Atlantic* and the *Galaxy*, these young people—chief among them Louise Imogen Guiney, Louise Chandler Moulton, Richard Hovey, and Thomas Bailey Aldrich—gave him an appreciation warmer than he had yet received.

His lifelong detachment from the active concerns of active Americans —abolitionism and philanthropy; his love of the Middle Ages and of Europe; his High Anglicanism, unabated by the local dominance of Socinians and Transcendentalists: these traits must necessarily have withdrawn him from the close sympathy of his contemporaries, all of whom, even Longfellow, lived more in their own time than he. There has come down to us no such rebuke of Parsons as Lowell, in his early reforming zeal, once administered to Dr. Holmes, his senior; but Parsons' detachment can scarcely have been approved. The highest praise of his poetry offered by a contemporary of his came, indeed, from Dr. Holmes, the most conservative in his literary and social tastes, who said to a friend, "Dr. Parsons was as true a poet as we had among us. . . . to his lifelong devotion to Dante, by the absorbing study he has given him, I attribute the felicity of his style, the exquisite art that characterizes his work. He has written some poems finer than any other American poet has written."

In temperament and attitude, Parsons had much in common with Irving, who confessed in his *Sketch Book*, "had I been merely a lover of fine scenery I should have felt little desire to seek elsewhere its gratification. . . . But Europe held both the charms of storied and poetical association. . . . I longed . . . to lose myself among the shadowy grandeurs of the past." The nationalist "programme" calling upon American writers to celebrate American scenes and the American past—the Indian and the Puritan, the Catskills and the forests of Maine—was insistent enough to draw from Irving his *Rip Van Winkle* and *Legend of Sleepy Hollow,* and from the equally literary Longfellow his *Hiawatha,*

Evangeline, and *Courtship of Miles Standish*. Lowell made his vernacular foray in the *Biglow Papers*, though of the New England poets only Whittier did his best work in this narrative reconstruction of the regional past.

Parsons scarcely tried. His "Hudson River" seeks to poetize an unstoried scene, not by supplying a "legend" but by pious hollow rhetoric professing the superior charm of the native over the European streams. But he is much more at home in descriptive pieces which, like "The Shadow of the Obelisk" and "Campanile di Pisa," invoke "picturesque" Italy, or in poems inspired by other poetry. When he prefixed a phrase from Dante or Petrarch or a sonnet of Michelangelo he offered not an honorific afterthought but his stimulus. In this respect his "On a Bust of Dante," superior as it is to most of its successors, justly characterizes his talent.

Parsons died in 1892, and is buried in the Mount Auburn Cemetery of Cambridge. His gravestone bears the appropriate verse from Dante, *"E da esilio venne a questa pace."* From posthumous tributes paid by his young friends, it would seem that, though they respected his verse, they gave him the higher due of reverence for his lifelong and single-hearted devotion to poetry. Richard Hovey regretted that Parsons "never came to be in perfect touch with his country, not to have that sense of easy security with regard to her which should mark the citizen of a nationality fully mature"; he deplored, too, that his poet felt no admiration for the achievements, in science and commerce, of the nineteenth century. But these were demurs by the way, at the aberrations of a nature so fastidious as to find philistinism everywhere. His antipathies brought their compensations: he furnished an example to his juniors of the craft-conscious and self-rewarded artist.

Parsons' friends, grateful for the quality of his spirit, gave his poetry praise little of it deserved. Much of his later verse is "occasional," or improvisatory; but at this kind of verse he was not the peer of Holmes, and his improvisation was too often merely improvised. For narrative he had—witness "The Willey House" and "Livorno"—no aptitude. He did himself chief disservice by failure in self-criticism. In the collected *Poems* (1854) and in *The Shadow of the Obelisk* (London, 1872), he mingled without sequence or selection his fine and his feeble. The posthumous *Poems* (1893) but perpetuated his critical unconcern.

Even in his best lyrics there are lines or stanzas which should not have been allowed to remain. Take the bathetic conclusion of "Dirge for One Who Fell in Battle":

Captain or Colonel—whatever invocation
Suit our hymn best, no matter what thy station,—
On thy grave the rain shall fall from the eyes of a mighty nation!

The conceit of Niobe America is at once too trite and, for Parsons' low-pitched style, too extravagant. Doubt of the soldier's rank arises, all too patently, from the need of words to rhyme with "nation"; for the sake of the final line, the other two were "manufactured." For comfort, one must turn back to the artful simplicity of the initial stanza:

Room for a soldier! lay him in the clover;
He loved the fields, and they shall be his cover;
Make his mound with hers who called him lover:
Where the rain may rain upon it,
Where the sun may shine upon it,
Where the lamb hath lain upon it,
And the bee will dine upon it.

Some development in Parsons' style is discernible. His early satires and prologues have their models in the couplets of Goldsmith and Gifford; his earliest lyrics belong to the school of Gray and Collins. Upon the later sonnets and elegies there is the breath of romanticism—the romanticism not of passion or prophecy, but, as in the poetry of Landor and Bryant, that of recollection and sentiment.

Some further stanzas may illustrate Parsons' best:

She hath fulfilled her promise and hath passed;
Set her down gently at the iron door!
Eyes look on that loved image for the last:
Now cover it in earth,—her earth no more.
("Mary Booth")

Should'st thou, sad pilgrim, who mayst hither pass,
Note in these flowers a delicater hue,
Should spring come earlier to this hallowed grass,
Or the bee later linger on the dew,—

Know that her spirit to her body lent
Such sweetness, grace, as only goodness can;
That even her dust, and this her monument,
Have yet a power to stay one lonely man. . . .
("Her Epitaph")

Like the smell of the vine, when its early bloom
Sprinkles the green lane with sunny perfume,
Such a delicate fragrance filled the room:
Whether it came from the vine without,
Or arose from her presence, I dwell in doubt.
("Upon a Lady Singing")

Brush not the floor where my lady hath trod,
  Lest one light sign of her foot you mar;
For where she hath walked, in the Spring, on the sod,
  There, I have noticed, most violets are.

Touch not her work, nor her book, nor a thing
  That her exquisite finger hath only pressed;
But fan the dust off with a plume that the wing
  Of a ring-dove let fall, on his way to his nest.
("Sotto l'Usbergo del Sentirsi Puro")

The style illustrated depends for its efficiency upon economy of words—the very sparing use of adjectives; the choice of admitted epithets dependent primarily, as in eighteenth-century verse, upon their apt directness rather than their suggestiveness; the basic use of the noun—as well as a rhythm of nicely varied pauses; a euphony of sound, avoiding, however, rather than welcoming, any spectacular alliteration or other phonetic sequence; a sustention of timbre and pitch; and a pitch too low for strain. Parsons' is the kind of poetry nearest prose, elegantly precise, not prophetic.

Every poetic style has its appropriate dangers. Symbolism tends to private associations and consequent obscurity; metaphorical poetry to a self-cancelling succession of explosions. Classical poetry precariously escapes the flat and the trite. Its art is to "turn" the "commonplace" of love or sorrow—turn it without mannerism but with distinction. In its "personal" lyrics, the "I" must not be too sharp or too special; the analogies must be illustrative rather than integral, variants of tradition rather than private symbols. Such lyrics prize the slight deviation above the violent revolt.

It is Parsons' final handicap that he came to no clear definition of a poetic "kind" and had no sure apprehension of idiom or aim, no sufficient care for the maintenance of tone (almost everything to a classical poet), no precision in measuring the distance of departure from the platitudinous figure or phrase. In classical poetry, all depends upon one's being as much a critic as a poet and having at least as much taste as sentiment. It is his achievement that he wrote a few lyrics, and rather more stanzas, in which these requirements are satisfactorily met.

Doubtless Parsons' own poetry suffered because of his early conversion to Dante. Like Donne and Milton, Dante precludes talk about the incompatibility of poetry and erudition. A poet gains by as much learning as he can assimilate. But to be a specialist in Milton or Dante and at the same time to be oneself a great poet: this is scarcely

possible. Parsons does not, like the Militonist Wartons, imitate and paraphase and parody his master; but one can imagine the consequence to a talent of living persistently under a colossal shadow. To be a great poet requires, among other endowments, invincible faith in oneself and one's uniqueness. To be any kind of poet stipulates—in ages when prose is the normal and unpretentious form—some presumption that one's personal vision has virtue. Yet how can any man of discernment avoid comparison of his talent, however he may develop it, with the range and power of Dante? He must read the master and then forget him; for Dante, who enlarges the reader, may very well stifle the poet.

Longer than his poetry or his translation, one may recall Parsons' figure—that of a gentleman of breeding, cultivation, and talent, an endearing amateur of the arts, like Charles Eliot Norton. Parsons is at once a slighter and a more intense Norton: without the latter's extraordinary gift for friendship, his critical concern for the well-being of the body politic, or his cultural evangelism, he had a passion for poetry rare in any age, and a lifelong surrender to one of the supreme poets which gave him single-mindedness and, almost, peace.

AUTOMATIC CALCULATING • *W. H. Watson*

One morning recently my interest was attracted to the behaviour of my dog, who interrupted his walk when he spied a cat sitting on a window ledge and engaged in a series of bellicose gestures towards this cat. By tapping the dog with the newspaper that had just been purchased, I abruptly terminated the display, and he went on with no further interest in the cat. Whatever the physiological details of the connection between the stimulus of the dog's seeing the cat and the overt performance, his behaviour seemed to follow a controlling programme. This control was switched off by my intervention. Doubtless if the cat had moved, the dog would have altered his programme in response to the altered stimuli. It must be confessed that it is somewhat odd to apply to a dog's behaviour a conception that is proper for an automatic calculating machine: nevertheless it will bear reflection.

During the war the development of electronic devices for military purposes initiated the growth that is evident today in the impressive scope of automatic digital-computing machines. There are now very many large machines under construction or in operation in the United States. In Britain and other countries significant effort has also been committed to learning the possibilities of such machines and applying them to numerical applied mathematics, accounting, and the multiplicity of arithmetical and "data-processing" activities that enter into private and governmental business.

In presenting to the public the amazing capabilities of electronic computers the daily press has out-metaphored its most extravagant confections of bygone days and has claimed that these "giant brains" can think. We do little credit to our intelligence if we are lured to regard the human brain only in this oversimplified fashion. Even the behaviour of my dog is a very complicated affair that would tax the ingenuity of engineer and mathematical programmer to imitate. Nevertheless, in attempting to impress their readers concerning the modern computing

engine, the newspapers do not err in the essential. On the other hand, there is some danger that the academic world may be generally disposed to dismiss the matter that lies behind the headlines as unworthy of its attention.

The main ideas of the logical structure required of a universal calculating machine were conceived over a hundred years ago by Charles Babbage in England.[1] We are now entering on the social revolution that must follow from the fact that the advent of electronic invention has drastically reduced the time required for large-scale computing. Elementary arithmetical operations on numbers comprising ten decimal digits can be carried out in a few millionths of a second. In whatever field of human activity computing or accounting (in its widest sense) can be brought to bear for practical affairs, there we can contemplate with assurance the intervention of the electronic computing device—provided, of course, that it has the capacity to store the relevant information and the speed necessary to use that information to produce results in time to control other machines or to influence executive decisions. The control of traffic in transportation systems, automatic control of factory production, inventory control, and other obvious applications in business, industry, and commerce are now being achieved, and new uses are being planned whose consequences for the economy under which we live are very difficult to forecast. At present the main restrictions on the rate at which this change can take place lie in the large cost of the machines (of the order of a few million dollars for one of large capacity) and the lack of men trained to use them effectively. That both the cost and physical size of these machines will be greatly reduced is no doubt the expectation of the engineers engaged in designing them. It is also envisaged that many machines will be introduced to operate with infrequent changes of programme, so that the demand for the services of mathematicians, physicists, and engineers will be mainly for those machines that are applied to scientific or engineering computing services and for the staffs of those concerns which design machines and new ways of using them.

The digital computing machine operates with an uncompromising attention to detail that must be imagined by the man who prepares the programme. This programme will be fed into the machine's store to control the course of the calculation. All instructions are coded numerically and enter the input of the machine usually via punched paper tape or punched cards. Since the binary system of counting requires only two digits (*viz*, 0 and 1) it is the most easy to use electronically

to represent numbers and has been very widely adopted. In this system, counting proceeds from 0 to 8, for example, as follows; 0, 1, 10, 11, 100, 101, 110, 111, 1000. The number $1024=2^{10}$ is denoted in this scale as 10000000000. Machines can be used to convert numbers entering in decimal form and conversely to convert the answer from binary to decimal form in the output. There is a marked trend to incorporate other facilities in machines so as to reduce the number of detailed instructions required from the programmer. For it is in fact necessary to atomize mathematics in order to compute by machine. This process can be carried out by the machine if the programmer chooses an iterative method; then a set of instructions can be used again and again in the same calculation. By means of a library of routines partial programmes devised for one problem are made available for others. The design of an automatic digital computer comprises circuits that in functioning would give effect to certain basic instructions such as "transfer the number at a particular place in the store to another register in the machine," "add a number into the accumulator," and so on.

Machines operate with different sets of basic orders, but all of them have a conditional control order according to which two numbers are compared. Depending on which is the larger the machine automatically looks to the appropriate place in the store for its next instruction. This device enables an iteration to be terminated and can be employed to make effective a criterion for choosing one course rather than another. It is this feature that enables a machine to play a game such as checkers.

However certain and pervasive the effects to be expected from the intervention of computing machines in industry and commerce, and perhaps because many of these effects are obvious, the academic world is hardly sensitive yet to the potential influence of the intellectual stimulus derived from experience with computing machines. In what follows I propose to try to expose some of these potentialities.

In the first place, numerical analysis—a branch of mathematics that has rarely received the attention it merits from pure mathematicians—is now emerging as an intellectually exciting subject. One must learn to conceive of processes for solving particular mathematical problems in relation to the computing resources available. This is an obvious point. Nevertheless, much of mathematical analysis has grown up in a computing vacuum. This process will now almost certainly come to an end, for analytic methods that never could be economically appropriate for a machine will not be used in practice. The airy disdain of the

mathematician who is not interested in the numerical realization of his formulations can now be called in question because computing can be done on the grand scale without tedium—but only if the calculation is programmed appropriately for a machine. Consequently the mathematician who wishes to isolate himself from actuality has to vacate a lot of territory he has up to now regarded as his intellectual birthright.

Secondly, computing by machine opens new roads to mathematical generalization. For instance, physics and engineering easily provide examples of systems that should in principle be describable by means of non-linear differential equations. By means of a machine one may solve such an equation numerically with particular data. If enough instances with different data are examined in detail, one can learn properties of the solutions that may lead to inductions about the solution of such equations, which in turn may be fruitful both for pure mathematics and for physics.

In the light of these reflections it is hard to refrain from suggesting that academic attitudes towards the study of mathematics should be modified. The "aesthetic appeal" attributed so widely among mathematicians to the experience of the mathematical innovator is now tempered and indeed enriched by thinking about the realization of formal processes. At the Computation Centre in the University of Toronto we were concerned some years ago with solving a system of 74 equations in 74 unknowns and the question arises: how accurate are the answers? In principle one can propose several ways of finding this out. Unfortunately the amount of computing involved in applying them is at least three times as much as required for the process of solution itself, so that to assess the accuracy of the solution is quite unreasonably expensive. It seems difficult to escape the conclusion that the examination of the error, in a numerical calculation, arising from the circumstance that only a finite number of digits is carried through each arithmetical operation must be conceived in relation to an actual method for finding the error. If the answer to the main calculation is obtained by iteration, comparison of the results of successive iterations will, for practical purposes, lead to good estimates of the errors.

Not only does the necessity to treat all numbers by finite series of digits force us to consider the propagation of error, it also reveals, on occasion, that some general methods (usually regarded as acceptable in the textbooks) are invalid when applied to particular examples. Experience in computing makes quite clear that ability to improvise is

an essential adjunct to the mathematical skill of the programmer. There is really nothing new in this discovery, but the emergence of computing on a large scale has emphasized afresh the need for practical attitudes in doing mathematics. This conclusion is likely to be contested vigorously by those mathematicians who have neither interest nor experience in computing and it is probably unpalatable to others because it seems aimed against academic isolationism. A mathematician with the practical attitude referred to in the foregoing remarks will recognize as his proper business not only physical or engineering problems but also the mathematical questions that arise in numerical analysis.

For natural scientists the high-speed electronic computer is a tool to be used for the numerical analysis of experimental data or for applying theory to phenomena more complicated than can be treated without such aid. Both uses lead to a better understanding of nature. By means of X-rays, for example, much may be learned of the structure of large molecules that interest biochemists (and eventually physiologists and geneticists) if adequate computing aid is available. Great progress has already been made in developing effective methods to provide this aid.

In engineering the computing machine is well suited to produce the substantial volume of engineering information required to justify designers' choices of structures and machines. As the means of giving effect to well-established physical theory and engineering design practice, large-scale computing can be more economical than working in a laboratory with models intended to produce comparable detailed knowledge of the behaviour of the system being studied under varied conditions of operation and families of assumed values of design parameters. The distribution of flow rates and water levels in a complicated system such as the St. Lawrence Seaway is a good example of a problem to which electronic digital computing has been applied successfully to get more detailed results than would normally be available without its aid.

Perhaps the most interesting mathematical development associated with computers is the new interest in the theory of games. A machine can be programmed to play a game provided that the programmer invents a good formulation by means of which the machine can evaluate each possible next move or finite series of moves. If the rate of play is not to be intolerably slow, the machine must not be required to examine too many possibilities before applying the criterion that selects the next move. If two or more moves are found to have equal value, the choice is made by chance with the aid of a random-number generator.

Consideration of the mathematical questions related to programming for games leads one to investigate strategy and to attempt to devise means by which the machine may generate its own programme. Here surely is a field that may contribute to the use of computing machines in quite novel ways.

The systematic examination of all possibilities for a limited number of possible future moves is at once the strength and weakness of the machine as a player. Each possible move is examined by its ritual because the machine has no selecting process for summarily discarding obviously unpromising moves as a human player does. In this there is, I think, an obvious moral for formalists who are concerned to discountenance the intelligent judgment of an individual man in favour of machine-like routines for investigating nature or man's social activities. The routine uses up computing time evaluating the insignificant. Just as the number of moves in a game that can be examined is limited by the speed of computing and that at which the game is to be played, so also must formalism automatically impose limits on its usefulness as a means of making significant progress in learning. This frustration can be mitigated to some extent if a formal routine can be applied through some high-speed device. But without the highly selective operation of a human mind to judge whether or not the output of the machine is relevant in a significant way to the purpose that brought the routine into existence, what the high-speed device does is generate the intellectual equivalent of noise.

Imagine that one had to enumerate all the possible combinations of moves in even the simplest game played on a board. The mere task of actually writing down significant signs to represent them could not be accomplished, so rapidly do the combinations multiply in number in the course of the imagined series of moves. By such elaboration are evolved the complicated possibilities of applying even a relatively simple scheme of rules to a small number of pieces. Now imagine one were presented with many examples of the series of moves made in a number of different games that have been played according to the same rules. Could one hope to discover the rules? This is somewhat like the kind of question that turns up in science—in the study of the weather, in astronomy, and in geophysics. In each of these sciences computing machines are being used to investigate hypotheses of varying scope. By faith in the scientific method, men commit themselves to such activities with the expectation that progress can be made towards understanding in ever increasing detail these aspects of our environment. A physical

scientist is perhaps entitled to reflect that the same kind of human activity might eventually make more progress than it has in the past towards understanding human behaviour, because with the aid of large machines it is now possible to manage very much more elaborate representations than can be attempted without that aid. Despite those prejudices masquerading in literature as facts—namely, that because of life's complexity it is impossible to theorize effectively about man's activities by the methods of physical science—some quite ingenious thinkers are preparing to commit substantial effort to attempting the "impossible." The activity will evolve and will never come to an end until men stop trying. In the process perhaps the most important result will be our changed attitude towards knowledge itself; but that is too large a matter to open here.

The invention of large fast machines is probably an even more significant achievement for man's intellectual future than the invention of the differential calculus. Instead of depending on the neat formulations that can be written down by one man and elaborated by algebra and mathematical analysis, we seem now to have open to us the combined resources of analysis and the arithmetical powerhouse to derive from the numbers we do know the set of numbers we desire to know about an actual or imagined system. All of the activities of man that involve counting in order to plan, design, and manage are affected.

Not only numbers are treated, however. Calculations with logical elements can also be managed by machine. The possibilities of ordering and combining them in large numbers can be investigated. Thus the whole range of the calculating aspects of thinking is being affected. In so far as one is prepared to commit human judgment to criteria that can be formulated in detail, a machine can be used to select according to these criteria—which, it should be emphasized, need not be few in number or given effect according to a simple scheme. Man will always have a part to play in selecting some criteria to govern the operation of a machine, but it is much too early in the history of computing machines to predict how much of man's function can be entrusted to the machine. In learning to use these machines we shall come to appreciate how much the family of inventions associated with electronic computing can contribute to a better understanding of our environment and of ourselves if we are willing to use them for this purpose. From the study of relatively small systems we can learn how we might undertake the management of larger ones. Learning will presumably proceed by induction from experience and by inventions

that give proper technical effect to these inductions. But this progress cannot occur unless men commit themselves and their present resources of knowledge to investigate what can be done. For example, to what extent can a computing machine contribute to the enormous task of translating scholarly and scientific writing in a foreign language? Clearly it will take a long time before it will be possible to have a machine render translations with the skill and insight of an accomplished linguist who really understands the subject of the work being translated. But without this linguist's participation at some stage in the evolution of translation by electronic devices the literary quality of the result will be poor.

The foregoing is only one example of the situations that will arise in trying to use computing machines on the one hand to reduce the amount of drudgery by scholars and on the other to stimulate them to reassess their own potentialities. For instance let us look at some of the purposes to be served by teaching various languages in a university. Not all of the graduates are going to become professional scholars expert in the literature and culture of other lands, or amateurs endowed with the means and desire to travel abroad. One important social justification is to educate some students whose understanding of foreign languages can aid the international communication that is an essential part of modern life, whether it be in business, industry, government, or research in medicine, science, and engineering. This function must be performed economically, and wherever machines can contribute to economy it is surely reasonable to employ them. In appreciating *this* thought an academic man can help his institution and, in due course, participate in its reinvigorated life.

Because of its attention to detail a large part of scholarly, as well as scientific, work proceeds according to rule, and could be performed much more economically by machine than without it. Problems concerning the storing, accessibility, and communication of knowledge are with us now. But these matters are too often regarded by academic scholars as outside the scope of their interest—as indeed they are of the scholars who have not acquired the attitude of mind which should characterize scientific research and which has been happily described as "a friendly welcoming attitude to change."

The changes in outlook that suggest associating philosophical reflections about language games with the serious practical application of computing machines have grown in the intellectual environment produced mainly by the great advances in biology during the past fifty

years. Mechanisms in the functioning of our bodies have been revealed in some of the most impressive of man's scientific achievements and these discoveries have changed our conception of the possibility of understanding some of the "mysteries" of living behaviour. We were ready to follow Claude Bernard in finding that physics and chemistry aid our understanding of physiological function. Having invented quite marvellous machines to imitate motor response to stimulus in a living system or to carry out calculations, we are now in a much better position to appreciate just how wonderful is the human brain. No machine has been conceived with even the possibility of storing the amount of information that can be retained by one average brain. And of course no machine is capable of the flexibility of the processes for handling not only what is stored but also what is in course of being added in the adaptable behaviour of a man.

It is really not surprising that experience with automatic computing machines should impress one with the flexibility of the selecting mechanisms we use in our daily life. Only in intellectual activities are we ready to give up being adaptable and to set up rules for guiding thinking which have much the same effect as has a poor programme for a machine intended to play checkers. I believe that it is no accident that we have had Wittgenstein's philosophical reflections on games in the same decade that an electronic digital computer has been programmed to play them and that theorists in computing are deeply concerned with logical matters formerly pre-empted by arts scholars. All of these developments have originated in practical as opposed to doctrinaire theoretical attitudes towards living.

Wittgenstein's detailed philosophical analysis[2] of many linguistic expressions proceeds by looking at language in relation to our behaviour and exhibits how formalism has tended to mislead philosophers. His work must in the long run have important practical consequences. He has treated some at least of the expressions that tempt a non-scientist to limit in his imagination the scope of scientific and engineering invention. In these expressions cultural influences originating in a scholarly past divorced from practice and invention are brought to bear with a somewhat specious literary effectiveness. They tend to discourage new approaches to problems that we seem now for the first time to be able to attack with some prospect of success. In appreciating the logical analogies by which we succeed in coping, through language, with the variety and adaptability of individual behaviour, Wittgenstein's investigations seem to me especially significant. They show just how we are misled to

treat language according to very simple logical schemes. In attempting to represent some aspects of human affairs, a user of a computing machine has also to beware of these traps. Fortunately he is not limited nearly so drastically as the philosophers, mathematicians, and logicians in attempting to represent varieties of logical structure that appear to have family resemblances to each other, for he has at his disposal vast resources to represent the individual members of each family.

In essence the keys to a proper appreciation of the difficulty of these matters are the realistic estimates of the numbers of the classes of signs used in representation, the populations of these classes, and the number and complexity of the processes by which the signs are to be combined. These are specifications that a computing machine intended to deal with them must fulfil. In principle this condition is met in many everyday affairs. There is no fairy's wand to wave away the exacting attention to detail—distasteful as this may be to the lotus-eaters.

In thinking about the capacity of the human brain in its rôle as a data processing system with very elaborate means to take in information and to act on it—and, we might add, to act also without ostensible stimulus from without—we have to attempt to estimate the corresponding numbers. The number of cells in the cortex of the human brain is about 1.5×10^{10}, a number that should be compared with the tens of thousands of vacuum tubes or transistors in a large modern computer or the hardly larger number of storage elements in a magnetic-core memory. The possibility of storing much larger amounts of information in a machine is achieved only at the cost of very much slower operation which, in turn, limits the scope of the machine's usefulness.

When we turn from the mere number of cells to connections between them we know only a little that can help our comparison. Nevertheless, at Massachusetts Institute of Technology W. Pitts and W. S. McCulloch have exposed some of the logical possibilities with the aid of a simple model of the working of the nervous system. At Princeton the late J. von Neumann, one of the ablest minds of this century, mathematician, scientist, and designer of computing machines, made a detailed comparison of human brains with computing machines. Anyone who was fortunate enough to hear him lecture on this subject will recall the intellectual excitement of the occasion. We are better able to appreciate how marvellous is the brain because of the experience of designing a large calculating machine. In a somewhat different analysis, but surely inspired by the same contrast, the late A. M. Turing, who conceived

the logical design of the first University of Manchester computer, has shown that by combining on a sufficiently grand scale a certain few very simple operations a machine could perform feats of amazing complexity. It seems now to be widely believed by mathematicians interested in computers that the superiority of the brain over machines lies essentially in the greater complexity of the nervous system and the greater efficiency of the human memory. A physicist or an engineer would probably like to remark on the very small amount of energy required for the brain's functioning compared with that required to operate a computing machine. The machine must be maintained in operation by a staff of special engineers. If one part of the machine fails, it produces a wrong answer. The human system maintains itself by the living process. If a part is damaged the rest of the system adapts itself to make good the deficiency. The electronic machine must perform each detailed step correctly or it gets the wrong answer to the whole calculation. The brain functions in quite a different way, for it is not so vulnerable to imperfections in the operations of its parts. And finally it develops its own programmes—if, and here we return to Wittgenstein, the word "programme" applies at all in a simple sense to the way in which we think.

To my mind, biological science is likely in the long run to be the great resource for innovation with respect to computing machines and the inventions descended not only from them but also from the other automatic devices we know today. The most promising road seems to be that of imitating nature with the aid of the theoretical tools provided by mathematics and physics to help us engineer our efforts to copy her methods in living systems. By using these inventions men will enlarge the scope and versatility of intellectual activity for worthy ends. By reflecting on them, men can be inspired by new vistas of the wonderful intricacy of creation. There is no evidence that the process of exploring it will come to an end.

NOTES

1 The first true calculating machine was made by Blaise Pascal in 1652 mainly to add sums of money. The development of machines in England and on the Continent was notably advanced by Leibnitz's invention of a machine with a type of stepped reckoner (first made in 1694). But all the early machines fall far short of Babbage's conception (1833).

2 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (London, 1953).

KEATS AND THE ROMANTIC *SEHNSUCHT*

Albert Gérard

The eighteenth century had its own various ways of appraising the dual nature of man:

> Connection exquisite of distant worlds,
> Distinguished link in being's endless chain,
> Midway from nothing to the Deity!
> A beam ethereal, sullied and absorbed,
> Though sullied and dishonored, still divine,
> Dim miniature of greatness absolute!
> An heir of glory, a frail child of dust, . . .
> Oh, what a miracle to man is man,
> Triumphantly distressed!

These lines of Young's sound like a rapturously optimistic retort to Pope's disabused treatment of the selfsame dual Man as "The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!" But whether in wonder, or wry causticity, eighteenth-century thought was fully aware of the limitations of man. It does not seem to have believed that man ought to transcend them. The wisdom of the age can be heard in Pope's advice, "Presume not God to scan," an injunction, in fact, to silence the metaphysical instinct. The main purpose of man was to make life bearable and comfortable within the predicament imposed by God. The ideal was neither to be reached nor even to be known. If happiness was, to Pope and many others, "Our Being's End and Aim," it was simply the happiness of moral rectitude, social adaptation, and material well-being. It was variously described as "good," "pleasure," "ease," "content." Its inferiority was acknowledged, but no higher bliss was believed to be possible. As Paul Hazard has said: "Leur bonheur était une certaine façon de se contenter du possible, sans prétendre à l'absolu; un bonheur de médiocrité, de juste milieu, qui excluait le gain total, de peur d'une perte totale."[1]

The starting point of Romanticism is to be found in part in an increasing dissatisfaction with such a modestly sybaritic view of happiness.

Happiness was also the "end and aim" of the Romantics, and perhaps more conspicuously so for Keats than for any other. But the Romantic notion of happiness derived from assumptions which were the exact opposite of their predecessors'. The poets of the Romantic generations were indeed as fully aware of the limitations of human nature as a Johnson or a Pope could be, but they met them in an entirely different spirit. They had a keen sense of the spiritual world, of the Absolute, the One, and they wanted to reach it, to earn the "gain total," to materialize their dream of perfection.

This desire to escape the duality and the grossness of life is known by its German name of *Sehnsucht* because it has generally been considered as the essence of German Romanticism. And, truly, the German Romantics and Pre-Romantics held that there is a fundamental contradiction between this "Sehnsucht nach dem Unendlichen," this "heisse Durst nach Ewigkeit,"[2] and life as it actually is: hence that mood called irony, which, as Friedrich Schlegel said, "enthält und erregt ein Gefühl von dem unauflöslichen Widerstreit des Unbedingten und Bedingten, der Unmöglichkeit und Notwendigkeit einer schöpferischen Mitteilung."[3] While eighteenth-century neoclassicism clearly ignored the *Durst nach Ewigkeit*, German Pre-Romanticism exacerbates it by ever reminding itself that it is both *unmöglich* and *notwendig* to gratify it: *Ironie* thus appears as a kind of masochistic contemplation of the torturing incompatibility of life and ideal.

This state of suspense may be in itself a source of poisoned delight, but it is not the only possible response to the initial impulse provided by the Romantic *Sehnsucht*. It can be evaded through a deliberate endeavour to deny the *Unmöglichkeit*, and thus to gratify what Baudelaire was to call "la soif insatiable de ce qui est au-delà"[4] by rejecting life altogether and escaping to a dream-world which is sometimes (as in Novalis) essentially spiritual, but sometimes also results from an orgy of wishful thinking.

That the English Romantics also shared the *Sehnsucht* which seems to be the common denominator of the whole movement, nobody will doubt. But they do not seem to have been attracted for any length of time to the irony and the idealism characteristic of their continental colleagues. Even Shelley implicitly gave up the desire to escape from the limitations of human nature either in dreams or in death at a very early stage of his literary career. *Alastor*, as I have tried to show elsewhere,[5] is the cathartic poem in which he dramatized the *Sehnsucht* and worked out to its ultimate absurdity the extreme idealism which was one of the temp-

tations to which Romanticism was bound to be subjected by the very nature and intensity of its spiritualistic assumptions.

Between *Alastor* and *Endymion* there are so many similarities that Keats may well have owed a debt to Shelley in the composition of his first ambitious poem.[6] The latter poem, however, deals with some issues which are far more concrete than anything that can be found in *Alastor*. One of these is the problem of the significance of pain, which is most conspicuous in the middle parts of Book IV, particularly in the episode known as "The Cave of Quietude."

The fourth book of *Endymion* was begun in the early days of October 1817. Keats had finished Book III by September 28. On November 22, he informed Bailey that he had written about five hundred lines of Book IV. He was thus probably about to start work on the Cave of Quietude, which occupies lines 511–62.

During those two months Keats seems to have had the darker side of human nature very much on his mind. There had been some quibbling and bickering going on in the little literary world to which he belonged, together with Hunt, Haydon, and Horace Smith. On October 8, he wrote to Bailey: "every Body seems at Loggerheads" (p. 51),[7] and he added: "I am quite disgusted with literary Men" (p. 52). He had some reason to believe that Hunt had been unfair to him, and he was very bitter at Hunt or anybody else claiming to have had a hand in *Endymion*:

> You see Bailey how independant my writing has been—Hunts dissuasion was of no avail—I refused to visit Shelley, that I might have my own unfetterd Scope—and after all I shall have the Reputation of Hunt's elevé. His corrections and amputations will by the knowing ones be traced in the Poem. This is to be sure the vexation of a day—nor would I say so many Words about it to any but those whom I know to have my wellfare and Reputation at Heart. [P. 53.]

It is difficult to take this last disclaimer at its face value. Keats was wounded in his pride as a poet and in his friendship for Hunt.

Illness was another source of dejection. James Rice was ill (p. 51), John Martin was ill (p. 54), and Keats himself was just recovering from some unspecified ailment: "The little Mercury I have taken has corrected the Poison and improved my Health," he wrote on October 8, "though I feel from my employment that I shall never be again secure in Robustness" (pp. 53–4); and a little later: "For this fortnight I have been confined at Hampstead—Saturday evening was my first day in town" (p. 54). Reynolds, too, had his share of troubles: on November 22, Keats wrote that he was not going to "talk any sorrow" to him as he

must have "enough vexations" (p. 64). But the poet was chiefly concerned with the health of his brother, which led him to some generalizing: "In this World there is no quiet nothing but teasing and snubbing and vexation—my brother Tom look'd very unwell yesterday and I am for shipping him off to Lisbon perhaps I ship there with him" (p. 54).

On November 3, Keats heard of the trouble Bailey was having in connection with his ordination, and he worked himself into an unexpected frenzy of indignation, writing to Bailey in what his editor does not hesitate to call "terms of almost incoherent abuse of the Bishop of Lincoln."[8]

Keats's preoccupation with pain and corruption was not on an altogether personal level. On November 22, he wrote to Bailey: "the world is full of troubles and I have not much reason to think myself pesterd with many" (p. 69). But his own illness, the poor state of his brother's health, the ailments of his friends, Hunt's tasteless boasting, and Bailey's disappointment must have had a cumulative effect, namely to make him ponder with unaccustomed intensity on human suffering in general and on the imperfections of human nature. Disabused or angry references to "this world" abound in the letters of October–November 1817. Nor are these the facile generalizations of the tearoom pessimist: they express a concern which was rapidly taking roots in Keat's heart and mind as a result of his growing experience and awareness of life.

In the course of those few October and November weeks, which are so crucial for our understanding of Keat's mind, this concern with the ills of the world gave rise to various attitudes which I shall now try to disentangle and define by analysing the relevant letters.

At the end of October, Keats wrote to Bailey (pp. 55–6):

> I have received a proof of your utmost kindness which at this present I feel very much—and I wish I had a heart always open to such sensations—but there is no altering a Man's nature and mine must be radically wrong for it will lie dormant a whole Month. This leads me to suppose that there are no Men so thouroughly wicked—so as never to be self spiritualized into a kind of sublime Misery—but alas! 'tis but for an Hour—he is the only Man "who has kept watch on Man's Mortality" who has philantrophy enough to overcome the disposition <to> an indolent enjoyment of intellect—who is brave enough to volunteer for uncomfortable hours.

And he added in a postscript (p. 57):

> You ask me after my health and spirits—This question ratifies in my Mind what I have said above—Health and Spirits can only belong unalloyed to the selfish Man—the Man who thinks much of his fellows can never be in Spirits—when I am not suffering for vicious beastliness I am the greater part of the week in spirits.

All this is admittedly rather obscure. It seems, nevertheless, that Keats is here contrasting two moods or attitudes, both of which are fairly ambiguous. First, there is a state of "health and spirits," "open to sensations" of pleasure and gratefulness, and inclined to "an indolent enjoyment of intellect"; although apparently desirable, this state can "only belong unalloyed to the selfish Man," and it is described as "thoroughly wicked" in so far as it prevents a man from ever suffering on behalf of his "fellows." Second, there is a state of "self spiritualization," which results from the "philanthropy" and the "bravery" of the man "who has kept watch on Man's Mortality," "who thinks much of his fellows," and who is aware of life's "vicious beastliness." It is an "uncomfortable" condition, which entails "suffering," and blunts the soul to all pleasant feelings, making it "dormant." In this respect, it can be described as "wrong" (though not "wicked"), but on the other hand, it is also "sublime."

John Keats, aged 22, was about to leave the Chamber of Maiden Thought and—to use his own terms of May 3, 1818—there was taking place a "sharpening" of his "vision into the heart and nature of Man," a "convincing" of his "nerves" that the world is full of "Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness and oppression" (pp. 143–4). He was discovering the vanity, nay, the utter impossibility of pure enjoyment, and, what is more, its worthlessness on the moral level. The ambiguity of the phrasing gives a measure of the extent of his anxiety and puzzlement, while his description of the numbness of his soul as a result of this new awareness reveals the intensity of his sympathy with human suffering.

The second stage in his evolution is apparent from the frantic letter to Bailey of November 3 (p. 60):

> Such is this World—and we live—you have [*for* live?] surely in a continual struggle against the suffocation of accidents—we must bear (and my Spleen is mad at the thought thereof) the Proud Mans Contumely. O for a recourse somewhat human independant of the great Consolations of Religion and undepraved Sensations—of the Beautiful—the poetical in all things—O for a Remedy against such wrongs within the pale of the World! Should not those things be pure enjoyment should they stand the chance of being contaminated by being called in as antagonists to Bishops? Would not earthly thing do?

From a sympathy that was somewhat querulous, Keats has moved on to indignation, contempt, and revolt. He shows himself more and more disturbed by "the weariness, the fever, and the fret," which were to become a lasting and major theme in his mature writing. But he seems to have given up for the time being the mood of "dormant" apathy (an

attitude, however, which will recur more than once) in a desire that something shall be done, that a "recourse" and a "remedy" shall be found against the wrongs of this world.

Keats does not advise escapism: "Religion and undepraved Sensations —of the Beautiful—the poetical in all things" should be "pure enjoyment"; they should not become "contaminated" in a struggle against worldly evil. What Keats wants is a recourse "within the pale of the World." This shrill note of ineffectual revolt was something new and, apparently, it did not attract Keats for long. He does not seem to have believed that institutional measures, though most certainly "within the pale of the World," might prove an adequate "remedy" to the world's evils. Hence a third, purely ethical, approach, on which much light is shed by the two letters which Keats wrote to Reynolds and to Bailey on November 22, as well as by the Cave of Quietude episode in *Endymion.*

Keat's new attitude towards suffering is hinted at in a question he asks Reynolds (p. 65):

> Why don't you, as I do, look unconcerned at what may be called more particularly Heart-vexations? They never surprize me—lord! a man should have the fine point of his soul taken off to become fit for this world.

The crux of this passage is of course the precise meaning of the word "unconcerned." Does it imply a deliberate going back on the attitude of sympathy which Keats had exalted in October and a return to the "indolent enjoyment of intellect" which he had been indicting in no equivocal terms? No admirer of Keats will ever admit this, and indeed the letter he wrote to Bailey on that same day shows that the "unconcernedness" he now advocates is not to be equated with selfishness (p. 69):

> The first thing that strikes me on hearing a Misfortune having befalled another is this. "Well it cannot be helped—he will have the pleasure of trying the resources of his spirit"—and I beg now my dear Bailey that hereafter should you observe any thing cold in me not to but <*for* put> it to the account of heartlessness but abstraction—for I assure you I sometimes feel not the influence of a Passion or affection during a whole week—and so long this sometimes continues I begin to suspect myself and the genui<ne>ness of my feelings at other times—thinking them a few barren Tragedy-tears.

To sum up: in October, Keats began to see the futility of any hope for easy happiness.[9] His mood was one of sentimental participation, which quickly changed into indignant sympathy at the beginning of November. By November 22, he had passed beyond even this to a form of stoicism which combined both acceptance of and detachment from pain; this much is meant by the words "unconcerned" and "abstraction": they

describe an attitude towards suffering which Keats was to elaborate in greater detail in the future.

The view of man's fate implied in the November letters to Bailey and Reynolds could be summarized as follows: there is a definite contradiction between the ideal and the real; the dream of perfection is only a dream; man should not expect pure unadulterated happiness—"I scarcely remember counting upon any Happiness" (p. 69), Keats writes to Bailey. But it does not follow that man should give up in despair all attempts to come to terms with life. On the contrary, he must be prepared to meet life on its own terms. He should expect and accept the corruption and the grief: the readiness is all. But he should not allow himself to be destroyed by them and to indulge in sentimental orgies of pity and self-pity. He should "abstract" himself, make himself "unconcerned," and then try to discover the good that may come out of evil, try to understand the creative value of suffering, to see it as a means of "trying the resources of his spirit." The way lies from suffering through positive acceptance and detachment to awareness and wisdom.

The basic imperfection of human nature, which had been accepted as a matter of course by men of the previous centuries, was a repellent notion to the younger Romantics. Theirs was a world in travail, and they all, at some moment or other, entertained the hope that it would give birth to a new society, that the dream of perfection would come true. This was an extremely youthful expectation indeed, and they were all in time faced with the same crushing dilemma: they must either obey the impulse of their *Sehnsucht* or become part of life as it actually is, as Wordsworth, they thought, had done. The first alternative is exemplified in *Alastor*: Shelley's young poet has had a glimpse of the ideal and devotes himself to it; his contempt for life and the world of matter leads him (as it needs must do) to ignore the beauty of nature and the earthly love of a woman; ultimately, it leads him from dream to death, a completely logical development.

The most significant difference between *Alastor* and *Endymion* is that Keats's hero is *not* thus blinded by his idealism. And the greater complexity of the later poem is due to the fact that it expresses in allegorical terms an attempt to have it both ways, to pursue the ideal and the actual simultaneously.

By November 22, 1817, Keats had reached the stage, in the writing of *Endymion*, when it becomes clear that any such attempt is bound to end in failure. The "grievous feud" of allegiances which was to lead Endymion to the Cave of Quietude has wrought in his soul a division

of which he is acutely aware: "would I were whole in love!" he exclaims (l. 472).[10] At the same time, two frightening experiences have shown him that this division will forever prevent him from gratifying either of his two contradictory passions: as he is alternately attracted to Diana and to the Indian maiden, both the goddess and the girl "melt away," and Endymion, we may surmise, is thunderstruck by the realization that wholeness is not to be achieved, that ideal beauty and sensuous love are never to be reconciled, that full happiness is an aim beyond the strength of man's deliberate endeavour. There is an obvious parallelism between the fate of Endymion and what was going on in the mind of Keats while he was writing this passage: in each case, one can witness the crumbling down of the most attractive hope a man can entertain.

It may not be impertinent to suggest that, according to conventional views of Romanticism, Endymion should have died on the spot, or at least committed suicide, following the example set by Hölderlin's Empedocles. Like the hero of *Alastor*, he should have been destroyed by his vain quest for the ideal. His attempt to grasp a fullness which is beyond the reach of human nature is a *hubris*, the proper reward of which is death. Indeed, Keats hints as much. Just at the beginning of the passage when Cynthia appears to Endymion, there is a scarcely veiled reference to Icarus:

> He who died
> For soaring too audacious in the sun,
> When that same treacherous wax began to run,
> Felt not more tongue-tied than Endymion.
> (ll. 441–4)

And after his stay in the Cave of Quietude, Endymion has the following significant remark:

> There never liv'd a mortal man, who bent
> His appetite beyond his natural sphere,
> But starv'd and died.
> (ll. 646–8)

What has Endymion been doing, except "soaring too audacious" and bending "his appetite beyond his natural sphere"? Why is it then that he does not die, proving thus untrue to type? The answer, obviously, must be sought somewhere between the experience of the failure and the recognition of its cause, that is, in the Cave of Quietude episode (ll. 512–62).

In order to understand the right meaning of this episode,[11] we should have a clear picture of the topography of the place, which Keats mapped out with sufficient precision for us to find interesting similarities with

the geography of his own mind as expounded in the letters. And we should first note the distinction between the Cave itself and its setting.

The Cave lies in the middle of "dark regions" which are "the proper home of every ill" (ll. 521–2). The word "every" explains why

> the man is yet to come
> Who hath not journeyed in this native hell.
> (ll. 522–3)

The den itself is a different place: it lies (ll. 513–15)

> Beyond the seeming confines of the space
> Made for the soul to wander in and trace
> Its own existence,

which in turn accounts for the fact that

> But few have ever felt how calm and well
> Sleep may be had in that deep den of all.
> (ll. 524–5)

That this place is indeed a centre of quietude in the midst of stormy regions is emphasized by Keats himself:

> Woe-hurricanes beat ever at the gate,
> Yet all is still within and desolate.
> Beset with plainful gusts, within ye hear
> No sound so loud as when on curtain'd bier
> The death-watch tick is stifled.
> (ll. 527–31)

The significance of the passage from the "dark regions" to the Cave of Quietude is made clear later, when Endymion realizes some of the true import of his experience in the Cave:

> "Alas!" said he, "were I but always borne
> Through dangerous winds, had but my footsteps worn
> A path in hell, for ever would I bless
> Horrors which nourish an uneasiness
> For my own sullen conquering: to him
> Who lives beyond earth's boundary, grief is dim,
> Sorrow is but a shadow. . . ."
> (ll. 615–21)

It may not be superfluous to insist on the remarkable consistency of Keats's imagery, which reflects the closely knit quality of his thought. Here as in the earlier passage the "dark regions" are called a "hell" (cf. l. 523); and the "wind" image is an echo of the "woe-hurricanes" (cf. l. 527). Obviously the "dark regions," which are the "proper home of every ill," are the poetic equivalent of the "world" of the letters, the world which is full of "troubles," of "misfortunes," of "teasing and

snubbing and vexation." This is the "native" hell which all men know at some time or other, whether they experience its corruption and imperfection personally, or are "self spiritualized into a kind of sublime Misery" by their sympathy with the sufferings of others.

Furthermore, this passage expresses exactly the same attitude towards pain and evil which had been formulated by Keats in his letter to Bailey of November 22: like Keats, Endymion welcomes the horrors which give him an opportunity to try the resources of his spirit. The word "uneasiness," which recurs in the letter to Taylor of April 24, 1818, clinches the matter.

As to the Cave itself, it describes in fact the condition mentioned by Keats when he said that his nature "will lie dormant for a whole Month." Under the impact of extreme misery, a sort of defence mechanism starts operating within the soul to protect it against the destroying effect of its experience. It looses its sensitiveness; its "fine point" is "taken off"; "grief is dim,/Sorrow is but a shadow" (ll. 620–1). This numbness, this apathy, is the calm sleep of the Cave. It is to be equated with the "unconcernedness," the "abstraction," described in the letters. The soul is abstracted for some time from the common life of man; it is carried "beyond earth's boundary" (l. 620). This period of insensitiveness is what enables it to evade the destroying influence of extreme suffering and, therefore, to go on living in "this world" and to "save the whole" of itself (l. 544). The experience has positive value in that it allows the soul a respite which gives it the strength to "try its resources." This phrase from the letter is echoed in the poem, in "sullen conquering," a paradoxical collocation of words which corresponds to the imagery used to describe the Cave: "sullen" refers to the prevailing mood of the soul in the Cave of Quietude, while "conquering" explains why Endymion is ready to "bless" such miseries. The soul comes out of this experience, not with a ready-made solution for its problems, but with renewed strength, with greater power to face life, and with a sharper insight into the moral nature of man and the moral meaning of experience.

The Cave of Quietude is the key to our understanding of the end of the poem. And the last episodes illustrate Endymion's precipitous descent into selflessness, at the bottom of which he will find the plenitude he had been vainly trying to reach.

The first fruit of his "sullen conquering" of his uneasiness is his determination to give up his hope of ever attaining on earth the heavenly happiness represented by Cynthia. He will dedicate himself to the Indian maiden, who is *within* his "natural sphere," although he retains the idea of meeting the goddess "in pure elysium" (l. 658).

This course, however, is not yet the resolution of his problem. The delights of the life he contemplates under the aegis of Pan (l. 634) are described by Keats in a way which excludes this hypothesis:

> The moutaineer
> Thus strove by *fancies vain and crude* to clear
> His briar'd path to some tranquillity.
> (ll. 721–3; italics mine)

The echoes to "had but my footsteps *worn*/A *path* in hell" (ll. 616–17; italics mine) and to "the man is yet to come/Who hath not *journeyed* in this native hell" (ll. 522–3; italics mine) might be taken as an oblique suggestion that Endymion is again, though unwittingly, on the dangerous fringes of the "dark regions." A new trial indeed appears to have been in store for him as the Indian girl intimates that she must bid him adieu (ll. 728–63).

Endymion can now truly be said to be "in last extreme" (l. 771). Once again, he has lost both Cynthia and the Indian girl, and he finds himself back in the situation which was his previous to the Cave of Quietude episode. But his reaction—and this is his second step on his way to selflessness—is utterly different. He accepts the defeat of his last hope, and decides to give up not only love but also his princely power and all the "impious" and deceptive "sensations" which are the only pleasures of this world (ll. 851–4). Thus, after renouncing his "great dream" (l. 638), he now intends to renounce his "earthly realm" and to go back to Cynthia, not in the hope of winning her in any possessive way, but as a "hermit" (l. 860) in her service. And he urges the Indian maiden to do likewise.

Keats's own comment on the lovers' vow of chastity makes it clear that the spiritualization of the Carian, at the stage we are discussing now, is by no means complete. On the contrary, what has been achieved so far he calls a "ghastly malady":

> Each diligently bends
> Towards common thoughts and things for very fear;
> Striving their ghastly malady to cheer,
> By thinking it a thing of yes or no. . . .
> (ll. 895–90)

It is perhaps difficult to understand exactly what those lines mean. But if we remember that Keats had got as far as *ca.* line 500 by November 22, and that he started (or intended to start) preparing his poem for the press on January 6 (cf. *Letters*, p. 73), there is some ground for thinking that he wrote the last pages of the book in the

second fortnight of December. It may therefore not be too rash to find some similarity between these lines and what Keats was writing about Negative Capability in a letter to his brothers dated December 21 (p. 72):

> . . . it struck me that what quality went to form a Man of Achievement, especially in Literature, and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously—I mean *Negative Capability*, that is when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason—Coleridge, for instance, would let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the Penetralium of mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half-knowledge.

What I am trying to suggest, though very tentatively, is that the two passages, read in conjunction, might throw some light on each other. The way to cure the "ghastly malady," that is, the frustration of *Sehnsucht*, is *not* to think it "a thing of yes or no," a thing to be refused or acquiesced in, a thing to be decided upon by a deliberate act of the will. The faith in will-power is a form of pride which seems to be akin to that of the man who is ever "reaching after fact and reason," who is "incapable of remaining content with half-knowledge." I am well aware that, in the letter, Keats is speaking of literature. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Negative Capability is a quality of "a Man of Achievement, *especially* in Literature"—not, we may deduce, in literature only. It suggests a humbleness of the mind, an acceptance of its limitations, a willingness to remain in doubt and uncertainty, a disposition to allow life to stay mysterious, beyond the grasp of either mind or will, in brief, an attitude which may apply to moral life as well as, if not better than, to poetry.

But Endymion has not yet achieved Negative Capability. He has been trying all the time to control his own fate, even in his renunciation of the spiritual *Sehnsucht* and of his "earthly realm." This renunciation did not result from a surrender to "the Penetralium of mystery," but from a deliberate act of the conscious will. It is something "willed," not "lived," and in consequence, Endymion is involved in the abstract logic of despair. Hence the death-wish (ll. 927–44).

Endymion's wish to die is not yet the final step towards spiritualization. The penetrating complexity of Keats's ethical thought is here obvious. The three stages of Endymion's evolution develop on strictly parallel lines. They all represent an advance on the way to detachment and acceptance, but Keats carefully emphasizes their negative aspects. First, Endymion's surrender of Cynthia and of his hopes of a happy life with the Indian girl were described as "fancies vain and crude." Then, his

surrender of the Indian girl and of his earthly realm, together with his decision to live like a hermit, appeared as a "ghastly malady." In his death-wish, there is likewise something blasphemous. Endymion laughs impiously at the holy beauty of nature as if it were a jest (ll. 944–9).

The decisive stage is reached when Endymion himself realizes that his derisive attitude of irritated despair is both blasphemous and out of tune with his true self (ll. 957–62): his wish to die is "impious" in the same way as his clinging to an earthly realm was impious (l. 854), and as his premature hankering after spiritual beauty was "presumptuous against love, against the sky . . ." (ll. 639 ff.).

Here at last Endymion has come to the end of his long pilgrimage. He has dropped all hope of readily grasping the ideal. He has detached himself from earthly enjoyment and from life altogether. He has even detached himself from his wish to die. In other words, he has given up his attempt to control his own destiny. He has abandoned his earlier *hubris*. He accepts his own limitations. He is ready to remain "in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts." Is it too much to say that he has reached the state of Negative Capability? However that may be, it is quite clear that this humility is the climactic point in Endymion's evolution. It is when he answers Peona, "Sister, I would have command,/*If it were heaven's will*, on our sad fate" (ll. 975–6: italics mine), that the Indian girl reveals her true identity, because, as she soon explains, he has now been spiritualized "by some unlook'd for change" (l. 992)—"unlook'd for" being the operative term, which also suggests Negative Capability.

One of the most vexing cruxes of Keatsian criticism is whether Endymion is an allegory or not. It is true, as Bridges observed, that he was "not making an allegory, but using a legend." But obviously the legend appealed to him because of some important meaning he sensed in it. Nor is it difficult to understand why the story of the God of Sleep should have attracted Keats of all men. Within the framework of the legend, Keats incorporated most of his experience and his conception of life, and the poem shifts according to the growth of his mind. The deep unity of *Endymion*—so real that it has encouraged several critics to systematize it unduly—reflects Keats's capacity for assimilating into organic wholeness the unceasing flow of experience. The meaning of the final episode, when the Indian maiden is seen to be Cynthia in disguise, has often been commented upon. But there is a more subtle symbol of unity, which is conveyed by means of light-imagery.

Cynthia is an image of light:

> . . . as she spake, into her face there came
> *Light*, as reflected from a silver flame:
> Her long black hair swell'd ampler, in display
> Full *golden*; in her eyes a *brighter* day
> Dawn'd blue and full of love.
> (ll. 982–6; italics mine)

Endymion thus obtains the light for which he was made: "I did/Wed myself to things of light from infancy" (ll. 957–8). Yet, it is not the same light. It is no longer the sensuous light of the butterfly world described in lines 937–9, the light of pre-moral enjoyment. Endymion has passed beyond "the realms of Flora and old Pan" to those of "the agonies, the strife of human hearts." This is the world of experience as distinct from the world of innocence. *Endymion* enlarges upon the intuition which gave birth to "Sleep and Poetry," and which Keats's life and thought were to verify. The light to which the Carian is admitted is the light of wisdom, not of innocence.

In fact, it may be said that part of the Preface is a comment on the spiral-like movement which has led Endymion from the light of boyhood through the darkness of adolescence to the light of maturity:

> The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of man is healthy; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted. . . .

Does not this apply to Keats himself, as well as to Endymion?

The Platonic undertones of Endymion's story have frequently been recognized, but the truly dramatic elements in the story have seldom been paid the attention they deserve. Endymion changes. His story is that of the growth of a mind. Book I represents his absorption in the luxurious. Books II and III, with Alpheus and Arethusa, with Glaucus, and with the drowned lovers, represent the stage of active sympathy, and, in a larger sense, of humanitarianism, the stage in which Endymion is "self spiritualized into a kind of sublime Misery" by keeping watch on "Man's Mortality." Book IV carries him a step further: now he has to face and conquer his own suffering, the grievous feud brought about by the equal intensity of his contrary impulses. Here, as I hope the foregoing analysis has made clear, a stoic strain merges with the Platonic and erotic tendencies. Endymion understands that he can never achieve the kind of happiness which he has been hankering after, and which can be described as a painless fulfilment of the opposite aspirations of his soul. He also understands that his self-reliance is in itself a form of guilt. He is therefore gradually led, first to strip himself of his

attachments, second to give up the attempt to mould his own destiny. There is no mistaking the Christian echoes of the words of the Indian maiden in this respect: ". . . I see there is no little bird,/Tender soever, but is Jove's own care" (ll. 877–8). On January 23, Keats, looking back on *Endymion* and forward to *Hyperion*, draws a revealing contrast between the two poems, the written one, and the one for which he is in travail: "One great contrast between them will be—that the Hero of the written tale being mortal is led on, like Buonaparte, by circumstance; whereas the Apollo in Hyperion being a fore-seeing God will shape his actions like one" (pp. 82–3). This statement sums up the final stage of Endymion's growth: he has stopped trying to be like a God, and he commends his fate unto the hands of "Jove," or "heaven." That this view is insufficiently realized within the framework of the narrative, nobody is likely to dispute. Nor could it be otherwise. The mainspring of Keats's inspiration has always been experience, intensely felt, deeply meditated. We can know from his letters what it was that had been proved upon his pulse during those autumnal months of 1817 while he was writing the last book of *Endymion*: it was first the dream of perfection, the infinite *Sehnsucht*; second, the obvious fact that plenitude and happiness are never given in this world of misery and vexation; third, the notion that in order to survive the soul must somehow withdraw its sensitive tendrils from contact with a wounding world; fourth, the conclusion that suffering does have positive value, that it gives the spirit an opportunity for trying its resources. Of the concrete ways these processes worked, Keats was as yet unsure, though he sensed that they must involve some sort of detachment combined with the acceptance of the limitations of human nature. Hence it is that the last part of *Endymion*, most, in fact, of what comes after the Cave of Quietude, seems to be the fruit of ethical thought and dramatic invention, rather than personal experience. Unlike Endymion, Keats was still in the "dark passages" upon which the doors of the Chamber of Maiden Thought open. This is just why Endymion's wisdom fails to convince. The last lines of Endymion are an attempt to embody an intuition which was as yet too vague to be capable of truly symbolic treatment, and which Keats expressed as an afterthought in the famous letter to Reynolds of May 3, 1818: "After all there is certainly something real in the World" (p. 145).

It was only a year later, in April 1819, after experiencing more of the heartbreak and the misery, that Keats felt able to understand completely the meaning of suffering (pp. 335–6):

The common cognomen of this world among the misguided and superstitious is 'a vale of tears' from which we are to be redeemed by a certain interposition of God and taken to Heaven—What a little circumscribed straightened notion! Call the world if you Please "The vale of Soul-making". Then you will find out the use of the world. . . . I will call the *world* a School instituted for the purpose of teaching little children to read—I will call the *human heart* the *horn Book* used in that School—and I will call the *Child able to read, the Soul* made from that *School* and its *hornbook*. Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a Soul? A Place where the heart must feel and suffer in a thousand diverse ways! . . . This appears to me a faint sketch of a system of Salvation which does not affront our reason and humanity.

The fourth book of Endymion is an attempt to figure out how an "intelligence" can become a "soul." Together with the letters of October–November 1817, it represents Keats's first gropings towards his "system of Salvation."

NOTES

1 Paul Hazard, *La Pensée européenne au dix-huitième siècle* (Paris, 1946), I, 25.
2 Friedrich Schlegel, Letters of October 4, 1791, and August 23, 1793.
3 Schlegel, "Kritische Fragmente" (108), published in *Lyceum*, 1797.
4 Charles Baudelaire, "Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poe," *Œuvres complètes* (Paris, 1954), 1031.
5 Albert Gérard, "*Alastor*, or the Spirit of Solipsism," *Philological Quarterly*, XXXIII (1954), 164–77.
6 Many of these similarities have been pointed out in: A. C. Bradley, *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (London, 1904), 140–4; L. Brown, "The Genesis, Growth, and Meaning of *Endymion*," *Studies in Philology*, XXX (1933), 618–53; J. D. Wigod, "The Meaning of *Endymion*," *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, LXVIII (1953), 779–90.
7 Page references are to *The Letters of John Keats*, ed. M. B. Forman, (3rd ed.; London, 1948).
8 *Ibid.*, 59.
9 An interesting retrospective allusion to the inner processes of Keats's mind at the time is to be found in a letter to John Taylor (April 24, 1818): "Young Men for some time have an idea that such a thing as happiness is to be had and therefore are extremely impatient under any unpleasant restraining—in time however, of such stuff is the world about them, they know better and instead of striving from Uneasiness greet it as an habitual sensation, a pannier which is to weigh upon them through life" (p. 134).
10 All line references are to *Endymion*, Book IV.
11 For different interpretations of the Cave of Quietude, see J. M. Murry, *Keats* (London, 1955), 166–98, and also various passages in N. F. Ford, *The Pre-figurative Imagination of John Keats* (Stanford, 1951), 79 ff.

LOCAL COLOUR IN CANADIAN FICTION

William H. Magee

The pride in local colour that gripped Canadian literature early in the twentieth century squeezed the life out of fiction because the storytellers generally fumbled their technique. Almost every one of them ignored his artistic duty of trying to find a new technique appropriate to his primary interest. Thus the unquestioning reliance on traditional devices which has characterized all Canadian fiction until recently particularly enervated the local colourists. For the problem of integrating this new aspect of fiction into a unified story was one of technique, facing not only Canadians but all novelists who stressed setting or atmosphere as a chief aspect of their art. The problem was basic to the widening art of the novel. In all English fiction regional settings had been growing more prominent and more vivid during the late nineteenth century. Both for huge panoramas of society like Trollope's and George Eliot's and for restricted dramas of small groups like Meredith's, the background was ceasing to be nominal. The regional novel was about to emerge as a distinct type. The first group in the trend appeared in North America, and the Americans and Canadians were the first fully to encounter the special problems involved.

The reasons for the appearance of local colour at the end of the nineteenth century belong both to the fictional heritage from England and the United States and to social history. Both British and American novelists had been describing settings thoroughly for almost a century before the local colourists appeared. Early Gothic novelists like Mrs. Radcliffe had used wild scenery to intensify horror, and historical romancers from Scott and Cooper on had used both scenery and regional descriptions to vivify historical panoramas. By the third quarter of the century Trollope was building the charm of Hampshire and Wiltshire into a fictional country as real as either, and George Eliot avowed the intention of describing the Midlands as they really were. In the United States Hawthorne had made New England equally real in

fiction. Although each forged a technique for integrating a fondness for distinct regions into fiction, Trollope succeeded the most effectively by permeating every aspect of his social panorama with the sense of a provincial way of life.

The local colourists completed this gradual trend towards emphasizing regional atmosphere when provincialism displaced a wider awareness of human conflicts in popular thinking. Late in the nineteenth century long-established communities which dreaded the increasing industrial disorder of manufacturing cities and mining camps, and in North America the new pioneering disorder of the prairies as well, proclaimed their own way in fiction as well as in the pulpit. Thus the strict Victorian morality became the ethics of the local colourists: stories set at home displayed a smug humour; those set against either of the new societies, industrial or pioneer, blandly preached the old order. As a result fiction that was written as both serious and optimistic now sounds childish. In contrast, the best stories for children still have their charm, for although they kept the smugness and the preaching they sound less pompous and often less provincial. Only the few tragedies and satires, which used the medium most successfully, achieved profundity instead of pomposity; they too sound less provincial. The seriousness of the one approach and the ironic perspective of the other forced some attention to the general problems of human living, perhaps in contrast to local ideals. Such stories offer the best but isolated examples of what, at its little height, local colour used for its own sake could have contributed to fiction.

Later regional novels have used setting quite differently, choosing as their models the pioneer and immigrant novels of Willa Cather or Frederick Philip Grove, and the psychological novels of Thomas Wolfe or Hugh MacLennan. Those few which, like Mazo de la Roche's, have continued to stress local colour sound escapist rather than provincial.

The local colourists were the product of the provincial society which flourished in the United States after the Civil War and in Canada in the first two decades of the twentieth century. American rather than British storytellers thus provided the more applicable model for Canadian local colourists. Both Americans and Canadians faced the same difficulties in technique, and none solved them with Trollope's success. In the United States storytellers from every region told of a way of life which for North America was long established, and although Canadians seldom echoed the belligerent pride of some American writers, their way of life was much the same. Contented local colourists, such as Sarah Orne

Jewett on New England and George Washington Cable on New Orleans, added humour for an effect of serenity. More militant local colourists such as Helen Hunt Jackson and Horatio Alger taught with a heavy didacticism which aimed at revitalizing the old way or extending it into the turbulent cities. Occasionally major artists such as Mark Twain recorded enduring rather than purely local reactions to a special way of life, and provided a compatible plot. Canadians after 1896 produced stories and novels of each of the three types. But of the later, bitter, regional novels of protest, such as those of Thomas Hardy in England and E. W. Howe and Hamlin Garland in the United States, almost none appeared before the 1940's.

Canadians found a model at home for the effect of serenity, or placidity, in *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852). The continuing popularity of Mrs. Moodie's minor classic made it the dazzling example of serious Canadiana at the turn of the century. When models of regional atmosphere from British and American literature met the growing provincialism and pride of Canada, Canadians found that Mrs. Moodie had long since fashioned them a pattern. By then they interpreted a bizarre custom like "Our Logging-Bee" as distinctive of their society, although it had attracted the immigrant author for its peculiarity. They regarded such characters as Yankee Uncle Joe and gentlemanly Brian the Still-Hunter as their founding heroes, although that pair had amused the dignified pioneer author as being uncouth. Furthermore, writers failed to realize that the loose unity which suited the disjointed sketches of Mrs. Moodie's autobiography could seldom give a novel or even a short story the integration which good fiction must have. Faced with an urge to work their often fresh descriptions of customs into a narrative, they typically related along with them an adventure or love story having an alien and bookish tone, drawn from some incompatible convention, rarely compounding the two into a unity. They also ignored the intense personality of Mrs. Moodie, which did give a wholeness as well as an artistic force to her autobiography. All the gnawing aversion to frontier crudity that gives *Roughing It in the Bush* an enduring power the local colourists no doubt excused as the waverings of a slow conversion to the ideal. By the year of her death, 1885, a society as stable as she could have wished for had developed, though it resembled her beloved rural England of the 1820's no more than Nova Scotia resembles Scotland.

The local pride that had slowly converted Mrs. Moodie did not seize on Canadian fiction for fifty years, despite the constant popularity of local settings. Although the best and best known of English-Canadian

novels of the nineteenth century are historical romances, flourishing the patriotism of the new nation rather than pride in some province, the more numerous used regional rather than national backgrounds.[1] Many an amateur in the long-farmed areas of Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritime Provinces, writing for neighbourhood printing and circulation, set stories in his own time and place. But local settings by no means implied local colour. Stories of love or adventure did pause for brief raptures at the countryside, but a rare glimpse at the northern lights might only excuse a midnight kiss.[2] Domestic stories exalted the Victorian virtues in Canadian settings with no particular interest in either the setting or Canada. Even Agnes Maule Machar, the most effective and most Canadian of all these minor storytellers, found no common pattern between the almost placeless Ontario of *Katie Johnstone's Cross* and the national geography lesson of *Marjorie's Canadian Winter*.[3] A few more militant writers of domestic stories, who preached a more "perfect" village life, particularly in novels of temperance,[4] showed even less interest in setting. None of these writers showed so much vital awareness of their districts as Kirby and other historical romancers of Confederation showed in the countryside and citizens of the new nation.[5]

In Canada the new sense of locality first started to emerge in the early stories and novels of Sir Gilbert Parker. Although he was living in Australia and England when he wrote, his love of quaint settings helped him to picture several parts of Canada more vividly than those living right in them had so far done. *Pierre and His People* (1892) and the later Pierre collections caught the sentiment of a romantic life on the prairies which had already passed forever. In Canadian fiction these stories are the first to recognize the influence of setting on character, though they do not exploit it so much as Parker's awareness would suggest: "Here is something of romance 'pure and simple,' but also tradition and character, which are the single property of this austere but not cheerless heritage of our race."[6] The character of the chivalric rogue Pretty Pierre does give the stories a firm unity by showing how the old way of life which he typifies can solve the dilemmas of the new policemen and pioneers. Here romantic adventure, Parker's favourite form of fiction, did blend with local features, but it was a dangerous model for weak Canadian writers. Another of Parker's books, *When Valmond Came to Pontiac* (1895), first explored the since overworked charm of rural Quebec, which Parker dramatized by blending it into a tale of sentimental devotion to lost causes, this time Napoleonic. If the initial fantasy of a lost offspring of Napoleon does not destroy all

credibility, Parker once again blends an old-fashioned attitude to life, preserved in a Canadian byway, into a unified story, of novel length. The only feature of local-colour fiction missing from Parker is the theme of pride in the perfection of the community; nor did he share Mrs. Moodie's delight in explaining special customs.

Always a literary nomad, Parker moved from setting to setting with succeeding novels, looking for a quaintness that pleased him and his public. *Mrs. Falchion* (1893) uses rural British Columbia as a backdrop for melodrama beginning in the Indian Ocean. *The Seats of the Mighty* (1896) abstracts some of the atmosphere of New France that Kirby carefully built into *The Golden Dog*, using it to flavour pure adventure with a taste of authentic life. Parker was essentially a historical romancer stressing adventure in the Stevenson tradition, and soon he abandoned Pretty Pierre for the remote past. To him locality was always a secondary aspect. The chief "advance" on Mrs. Moodie which local-colour storytellers could derive from Parker was the use of tears or suspense as a unifying principle.

By the 1890's, when Parker was exploiting this wistful localism, Canadian writers were much more likely to admire special customs than they had been during Mrs. Moodie's youth. The temper of the times, which had once prompted the lauding of Confederation in historical romances, now reinforced a narrower pride. Provincial-rights governments in the provincial capitals, the anti-Confederation meeting of these governments in Quebec in 1887, and the election of Laurier in 1896 by anti-centralist votes in Ontario and Quebec, all indicated the new spirit that swept national feeling out of Canadian literature. At the other extreme from pride in Confederation, little of the imperialism or expansive nationalism which was bursting forth in England and the United States surged into Canadian literature. Even less of the peripheral unrest in the new manufacturing, mining, and prairie farming towns and camps was as yet bothering Canadian fiction; neither writers nor readers were interested in novels of protest. Instead, citizens annoyed at laxities and unruliness outside their peaceful countryside settled comfortably into their own clear-cut order. Their philosophy, as seen in their writings, achieved the same complacency of perfection, based on faith in a Victorian morality, which had been flourishing in England and the United States, and they soon urged through the rigid laws for which it is most remembered today: the Canada Temperance Act in 1878 and the Lord's Day Act in 1906. Once established, pioneers like Mrs. Moodie may have felt similarly self-satisfied, but for a more positive reason: the new customs of the hard-won homes

fascinated them. In contrast the local colourists, self-sufficient and self-satisfied, developed beyond a literature of regional settings to a literature of regional prides for quite different reasons: some rushed into print to defend their order from the impinging turbulence outside; some set out to evangelize the hapless turbulent outsiders; some just glowed in admiration of their own perfection. Storytellers with each of these three attitudes, emulating their English and American predecessors, took over the Canadian novel for more than a quarter of a century.

For Duncan Campbell Scott, Canada's poetic local colourist, as for Parker, general trends in the parent literatures rather than Mrs. Moodie's specific example again were the model, though her pattern for unity would surely have helped him. Scott's short stories did not reproduce the assured serenity either, but instead displayed a longing for a serenity which seemed to be slipping away. He stressed that sense in his connected short stories in *The Village of Viger* (1896), in which he looked to French-Canadian villages for the same idyllic charm that fascinated Kirby, Parker, and Marshall Saunders. All of them wrote with a wistfulness for the last of the good old days, but Scott evoked it with particular poignancy:

> It was too true that the city was growing rapidly. As yet its arms were not long enough to embrace the little village of Viger, but before long they would be, and it was not a time that the inhabitants looked forward to with any pleasure. It was not to be wondered at, for few places were more pleasant to live in. The houses, half-hidden amid the trees, clustered around the slim steeple of St. Joseph's, which flashed like a naked poniard in the sun. They were old, and the village was sleepy, almost dozing, since the mill, behind the rise of land, on the Blanche had shut down. The miller had died; and who would trouble to grind what little grist came to the mill, when flour was so cheap? But while the beech-groves lasted, and the Blanche continued to run, it seemed impossible that any change could come. The change was coming, however, rapidly enough. Even now, on still nights, above the noise of the frogs in the pools, you could hear the rumble of the street-cars and the faint tinkle of their bells, and when the air was moist the whole southern sky was luminous with the reflection of thousands of gas-lamps.[7]

Here an economic awareness firmly grounds what could easily have become a sentimental rapture. Also the touch of the nature poet heightens the local beauty. Such a passage illustrates the essential conflict with a clarity achieved by only the most acute writers, such as Leacock and Hémon. Yet with Scott the strength stands alone. The basic challenge to all these storytellers, the difficulty of finding a fictional frame of plot and characterization appropriate to lauding local atmosphere,

baffled Scott more than it did many a mediocre writer. Instead of domestic or humorous plots, or even the non-artistic conflicts of didactic local colourists, he fell into using mystery stories and a plot suspense incompatible with the local charm. In various stories involving such characters as a robber, a madman, a murderer, and a mysterious pedlar, Scott draws on a purely fictional tradition of life for a frame for the manners. More harmonious stories describe Viger folk anxious to visit the outside world. A vain desire to revisit the childhood home gives "Paul Farlotte" just the right perspective. In this closing story of the volume, the village schoolmaster abandons his long-earned trip to his dying mother in France in order to help feed the orphan girl across the street. Scott steadied the atmosphere by restraining the sentiment, though he revealed once more that Viger is his idyll of a village "on the boundaries of Arcadia, the first inlet to its pleasant, dreamy fields."[8]

For Ralph Connor the Glengarry of Scottish Puritans was a flourishing reality, not a vanishing daydream. In his stories this country civilization still had the stamina both to reconvert erring members and to send forth missionaries to the city and the prairies. All his fiction gained the unity which Scott's lacks by concentrating on such didacticism. *The Man from Glengarry* (1901) and *Glengarry Schooldays* (1902) flow most genially, for their society looks firmest. Although generally close to the didactic group of local colourists in the United States, they most of all recall Mrs. Moodie in tone. Both a talkative pride in local customs and a complacent humour make dominant a mood much like hers. Traditions like "The Sugaring Off," "The Wake," and "The Logging Bee" again characterize men and women fully as distinctive as hers, though less real. But whereas Mrs. Moodie unified her sketches and deepened them with her own lessening dismay at backwoods crudities, Ralph Connor avowed a moral purpose and strove to fulfil it. "No man is great who is not good," he declared[9] and his heroes thrill each novel with a fictitious conflict of good and bad. When Ranald in *The Man from Glengarry* goes west to British Columbia, he shows an awareness of Canada rare in local colour fiction, but again melodrama and moralizing undercut the art. When he saves British Columbia for Confederation by quashing an annexation rally in New Westminster or when he persuades interior loggers to become teetotallers, he forsakes art and life at once. Almost every strength has its prototype in *Roughing It in the Bush* and almost every weakness is a departure from it.

When Ralph Connor set whole novels in the West, the customs and quaint humour sank further beneath the preaching and fighting. Both *Black Rock* (1897) and *The Sky Pilot* (1899) pit a minister from old

Ontario against the turbulent West, in a struggle to introduce the mellow civilization of the older provinces. Only beneath the straightforward preaching, and the exciting incidents meant to verify it, has the colour of odd characters and customs sustained a more satisfying interest. When describing the frontier pastimes centred on the saloon, Ralph Connor caught the raw force there, though not much of the crudeness. In *The Sky Pilot* heathenish Bronco Bill and blasphemous Gwen Meredith, a desperately real nature girl, do characterize this community of no restraints just as slippery Yankees or fierce Scots catch old Ontario in *Roughing It in the Bush* and *The Man from Glengarry*. Ralph Connor lacked any single brilliance in artistry to match Scott's poetic provincialism, but didacticism and melodrama gave his local colour some of the direction Scott's lacks.

The non-didactic, non-melodramatic type of local colour story appeared first in Canada in *Where the Sugar Maple Grows* (1901), by Adeline M. Teskey of Welland. This book of connected sketches is both closer to Mrs. Moodie in subject and tone and more typical of the Canadian local colourists of the next two decades. The failure in technique is very typical. Adopting the point of view of an American who cools off in the village of Mapleton each summer, the author stressed characters and customs even more than Mrs. Moodie had done. Neighbours like "The Out-of-date Minister," "Crazy Tim," and "The Man with the Hoe" delighted her as harmless but distinctive citizens of the antique harmony that is Mapleton. The genial humour that the restricted summertime friendship no doubt encouraged adds the one unifying tone to the loose framework of the holiday sketches. It is the tone of Mrs. Moodie, though emaciated. None of the personal intensity which distinguishes *Roughing It in the Bush*, none of the bitter humour of human meannesses, weld these sketches into forceful art. Nor is there any descriptive skill like Scott's with Viger to add strength. Like Mrs. Moodie, Adeline Teskey built stories on the provincial manners of old Ontario; like Mrs. Moodie she chose a comic perspective. She differed, coming half a century later, in showing none of the pioneer's despair at crudity and finding no strong interest to replace it. This defect is the defect of almost all her contemporaries.

Local colourists who wrote novels rather than short stories had the even more difficult task of finding a larger unified conflict in the same subject-matter. Often they relied on minor customs no doubt meant to symbolize the life they adored, but actually too superficial to do so. Surface details which suited Mrs. Moodie's different perspective, of self-characterization, look insipid in full focus. No custom is more persistent

in the fiction than the banning of organs from the town kirk. Several novelists chose it to focus a conflict between traditional and radical townsfolk. Indeed the radicals could look equally lax for wanting organs in the church, for dreaming of moving away, for joining labour unions, and for free thinking. Marian Keith in *Duncan Polite* (1905) made her hero both keep an organ out of the kirk and, at the deliberate sacrifice of his life, redeem his nephew from free thinking. Robert Knowles in *St. Cuthbert's* (also 1905) again worried his hero about organs but provided him the salvation of rejecting a cosy pulpit in South Carolina for the austere but somehow more wholesome charge in his small Ontario town. Knowles and a few others kept more up-to-date by bringing in union leaders from the city, dreading them perhaps as much as an exodus to the south. Although this conflict hinted at a more lifelike than fictional threat, the jolly workers in these novels rejected alien agitators and settled back into the ancient harmony. These local colourists all hit on a conflict more congenial than Scott's and more literary than Ralph Connor's, but its shallowness usually makes it sound juvenile.

Indeed most local colourists who are still read are read by juvenile readers. What is superficial in adult characters can be serious in children. Even in her hey-day L. M. Montgomery wrote particularly effectively by aiming her Anne and Emily stories at children. She has also probably attracted as many adult readers as her fellows have, judging from sales and from Mark Twain's enthusiasm.[10] Her *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) more closely resembles the long American tradition of regional stories for children, in their girls' version, than it does Mrs. Moodie's pattern of locality. She also solved the problem of a unified conflict. Instead of bizarre customs she described the representative goodness and dullness of life in Prince Edward Island, with its concentrated old provincialism. Yet when Anne combatted the dullness by fancying a busy fairy life in the quiet countryside, the conflict entered her very character and became internal for the first time since *Roughing It in the Bush*. When Anne in growing up abandoned a myth that had made her "naughty," and sacrificed it to be good, puritanism seized her conscience too. Thus the Anne and Emily books use central rather than secondary features of village life, though they too laud it and end with a reconciliation of the conflicts against it.

Only two humorists centred mature stories on local colour; they were mildly satiric rather than genial. In the title story of *Old Man Savarin* (1895), E. W. Thomson revitalized the forgotten significance of two old customs for his purpose: one let a prisoner walk freely up to the

posts that marked the prison limits; another required the plaintiff to pay for the prisoner's board. Thus the Glengarry Scotsman of the story goes home to his sick child without breaking jail by carrying a prison post before him and planting it beyond his house. Later he is freed when his board bill at prison goes unpaid. Thomson not only integrated his basic story with the local colour but also made a custom live instead of embalming it.

Stephen Leacock wrote *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* (1912) with a similar interest in local colour, but he chose more day-to-day customs and moulded them with a dynamic technique. Although *Sunshine Sketches* also lacks the easy unity of plot whose attainment baffled local colourists, it creates a particularly vivid single atmosphere of the town of Mariposa in Missinaba County. The lethargy of a less competitive, small town life and the unconfident smugness of its dullness generalize a way of life that even Thomson caught just in snippets. Only there in the modern world would a Reverend Mr. Drone rise to the top of his profession. Only there would a calculating Josh Smith let a sentimental good will over the church-building fund affect his ruthlessness. Only there would Peter Pupkin triumph as the milk-and-water hero. When Leacock let these solid citizens just manage to talk up the town population from 5,000 to 10,000 between censuses, he showed that their local pride was no more than an extension of their egoism. Appropriately he chose local quirks of human nature—at home, at play, or at work. None of the unusual customs which his lesser brethren featured link him to the tradition of the bizarre. Mrs. Moodie's logging bees belong to such factual records of unusual life as hers, not to artistic pictures of essential humanity. In telling about the annual town picnic on the lake steamer, Leacock described both the special enthusiasm of a combined effort shared by the whole community and the more universal heroism and cleverness called forth by the steamer's sinking, though he burlesqued both feelings. Similar treatments of the church-building fund, a temperance fight against a licensed hotel, and a political campaign for an election round out the record of dramas that did in life characterize these towns. Most local colourists ignored such chief interests of small town life, and the few who described any seldom chose more than one. Leacock achieved all the atmosphere with Mariposa that Scott did with Viger, and he described the essential occupations and pastimes too. The curtailment of quaintness in no way reduced the regional tone, but it enhanced the universality of the art.

The detachment of humour also helped Leacock to integrate his regional theme into a more unified art. Like Scott he created the

atmosphere of a complete community; but by exposing simplicity as naïve instead of ideal and by estimating the secret local longing for city life, as well as the city man's secret longing for Mariposa, he was faithful to reality. Peter Pupkin is singly foolish when he peddles his bicycle fifteen miles to build up courage to glance twice at a girl. But he shares an unquenchable human longing with all Mariposa when he subscribes to an encyclopaedia of art on the volume-a-month plan: "The *Lives of the Painters,* one volume at a time—a splendid thing in which you can read all about Aahrens, and Aachenthal, and Aax and men of that class."[11] Here Leacock exploded the book-a-month scheme with one of his own special quips, but he returned to the longing again and again, in the city as well as in Mariposa. When the city businessmen of his "L'Envoi" hear the evening train leaving, it sings for them the most sorrowful of dirges, "MARIPOSA! MARIPOSA!" Living in Montreal but loving his summer home in Orillia, Leacock did not accept provincialism automatically: he chose it deliberately from his semi-urban and scholarly perspective. His personal choice showed him how to unify local colour around appropriate characters and themes, if not plot conflicts, though in the ironic rather than the usual serious mode.

Only three Canadian storytellers succeeded at all in centring their local atmosphere on a solemn or a tragic mode instead of on description, teaching, or humour. In typical novels such as *Judith Moore* (1898), Joanna E. Wood of Brantford basked with dismaying warmth in the Ontario that Ralph Connor and Leacock equally loved, but in one novel she blasted a chilly wind through it. *The Untempered Wind* (1894) sets an unwed mother against the social order of the small towns, here represented by the leading lady of the church. Out of such an already clear-cut conflict, Miss Wood etched a clinically sharp plot by characterizing the mother as gently admirable and the lady of the church as wicked. Attack is always easier than defence, in fiction as in life. Miss Wood achieved an integration of local colour and fiction unmatched by the genial storytellers. A tragic force also entered with this harsh social criticism of the sedate countryside of Ralph Connor and Adeline Teskey, although obvious partiality and an exaggeration into blacks and whites spoils the effect.

A different tragic force, too solemn for satire, helped Norman Duncan balance the local and the universal in stories of the Newfoundland coast and the Labrador. Although Norman Duncan was born in Brantford and grew up amid the traditions of sedate local colourists, a visit as a journalist to Newfoundland shocked him into a different course. In his stories and novels ignorance, starvation, and unchecked illness are as

credible as good-natured quaintness, and not so jaded in force. Both in the connected short stories of *The Way of the Sea* (1903) and even in the novel *Dr. Luke of the Labrador* (1904), Duncan departs from the usual manner of the local colourists to present fishermen and their families engaged in a life-long fight with a malignant nature. In these works details of boat-building and sailing belong to the very heart of the plot, as similar accounts of house raising and sugaring-off do not to most local colour stories. Norman Duncan achieved such strength only in his few best short stories, however. More often the sentimentality and the pretentiousness characteristic of the didactic local colourists vitiated his effect too. Particularly the novel *Dr. Luke of the Labrador* flounders in tearful death scenes and childish dreams of medical heroism. Yet Duncan achieved a unity and force unmatched by his English-Canadian fellows.

The French-Canadian novelist Louis Hémon combined in *Maria Chapdelaine* (1914) the more traditional local colour background with the more profound theme of Duncan, while avoiding Duncan's extravagances in feeling and style. Although the rural Quebec which Hémon described was cruder and more pioneering than most literary Ontarios since *Roughing It in the Bush*, the interest in atmosphere was the same, and Madame Chapdelaine remembers as a contrast Quebec as the long-established and sedate town of her youth. An account of a day-long midwinter sleigh ride home from church combines the quality of a Mrs. Moodie with the intense conflicts of a Duncan. A midsummer berrying which helps on a pair of idealistic young lovers again joins the local and the general but with a serenity unknown in Duncan's lesser tragedies. The proximity of the virgin forest provides for the romance of fur traders, trappers, and woodsmen and for a catastrophe in which nature seems less malicious than mighty. Louis Hémon did not belong wholly to the country or the customs he described, and he was in no way related to his English-Canadian contemporaries, but his novel shows how memorable a story and how single an effect the materials of the local colourists could at best produce.

Since 1920 provincialism and its literary by-product have been slowly retreating from the national scene in Canada. In fiction in the West, such immigrant and pioneer novelists as Grove wrote consistently stronger novels in a different regional mode. For them local life became an archetype of human existence since the dawn of history. In Ontario, though the novels were generally weak, only a few new writers adopted the mode that had monopolized fiction there for over twenty years. Many besides Morley Callaghan have reflected a city instead of a country

perspective in novels of social protest, and for them locality is more useful for generalized than for regional implications. Even more storytellers have joined Mabel Dunham, Thomas Raddall, and Will R. Bird in a return to the historical romance, almost dormant since the turn of the century.[12] Raddall and Bird particularly have stressed local attitudes and even colour, but neither depends on regional atmosphere for plot or unity. A few novelists like Mazo de la Roche have pictured a wistfully unreal countryside in an apparently deliberate abstraction from reality. Their use of the regional scene probably derived from the local colour tradition, as Miss de la Roche's early novel *Possession* (1923) indicates, but they suggest a frank escapism which local colourists would never have admitted. Mazo de la Roche also relies for her chief interest on more conventional, and more useful, types of plot and characterization. Since World War II still other novelists have recreated regional settings to show the psychological effect of a vivid environment on maturing men and women. Hugh MacLennan, W. O. Mitchell, Ethel Wilson, and Ernest Buckler have varyingly achieved the unity which local colourists missed, by telling of the moulding effect of regional life on individual wills. They too have used more fruitful techniques of fiction for their characters and conflicts.

In contrast to these diverging interests, a minority have continued the tradition of local colour fiction. Older writers like Ralph Connor and L. M. Montgomery were as prolific as ever in the twenties, and new writers have continued the declining tradition even into the forties and fifties. The most widespread form has lasted the longest. Non-didactic though highly proper stories of rural Ontario are still written, although some storytellers have also ferreted out quiet corners in the Far East, the Far West, and the Far North. In *John Matheson* (1923), Clara Rothwell Anderson described her Ontario town with all the warm whimsy of Adeline Teskey. A decade later, in *Hill-Top* (1935) and *Three Measures* (1938), Jessie L. Beattie wrote more solemnly of her Ontario town, measuring out a careful retribution for the heartless religion of her one crank. When Grace Campbell echoed the old interest still a decade later in *Thorn-Apple Tree* (1942), she adopted a definitely historical tone in describing the Glengarry that Ralph Connor adored. Her chief interest is a light story of love (or, in *The Higher Hill,* war), but the way of life is in itself a good thing. Careful accounts of barn-raising and sugar-making echo the colour of special customs which for all these writers made a good life absorbing. Her novels close the panorama of a century of local colour storytelling, beginning with *Roughing It in the Bush* and reaching a nadir at the

turn of the century. What sounds like a day-to-day life in Mrs. Moodie, a missionary cause in Ralph Connor, and a joyous summertime in Adeline Teskey, has faded into a stylized backdrop for light moralizing or love making. The more conventional storytelling and the historical frame do give *Thorn-Apple Tree* the unity so often missing from the works of more thorough local colourists. Yet from first to last their devotion to a type of fiction technically beyond them and, as they generally used it, not potentially of wide interest proved a mistake. Where a heartfelt reaction to local manners gave Mrs. Moodie a loose but authentic unity, didacticism perverted Ralph Connor's art, superficiality made Adeline Teskey's sound childish, and more recently Grace Campbell's trite adventure, like Duncan Campbell Scott's, recalls life according to fiction rather than fact. Canada as a nation produced little that is great out of her years of intense provincialism, and her writers produced still less.

NOTES

1 Some of the historical romances also sound as provincial as national, particularly those written in the Maritime Provinces by Charles G. D. Roberts and Marshall Saunders.

2 Cf. Mrs. G. C. Huddleston's *Bluebell* (Toronto, 1875).

3 Miss Machar tried to sound more specific than she actually was. In the respective titles she called *Katie Johnstone's Cross* "A Canadian Tale" and *Marjorie's Canadian Winter* "A Story of the Northern Lights."

4 Cf. Arthur W. Moore's *Norman Stanly's Crusade: Or, The Dunkin Act in Turnipham* (Montreal, 1877) and John Morphy's *Ned Fenton's Portfolio* (Quebec, 1863).

5 Single novelists did repeat an interest like Mrs. Moodie's throughout the century, generally stressing the facts of local customs. Joseph H. Hilts in *Among the Forest Trees* (1888) included chapters on "House-Building," "Sugar Making," and "Some Old-Time Customs" (including a logging bee).

6 Parker's prefatory "Note."

7 "The Little Milliner," *The Village of Viger.*

8 "Sedan," *The Village of Viger.*

9 *The Man from Glengarry*, chap. VIII.

10 Cf. F. L. Mott, *Golden Multitudes* (New York, 1947), 217, 218. Mott estimates sales at 800,000 copies and quotes Mark Twain as declaring that Anne is "the dearest and most moving and delightful child since Alice in Wonderland."

11 "The Extraordinary Entanglement of Mr. Pupkin," *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town.*

12 Apart from Parker, who became less and less Canadian the more he wrote, the only persistent historical novelist in the first two decades of the twentieth century was Theodore Goodridge Roberts (*Hemming the Adventurer*, 1904, and many others). A few writers, such as W. D. Lighthall and W. W. Campbell, clearly belonged to an earlier generation in literature. Apart from these writers no one of note was writing historical romances between 1900 and 1920.

REVIEWS

Anatomy of Criticism

Periodically since the Renaissance, important intellectual developments outside the field of literature have produced books on literary criticism—usually with a word like "poetics," "elements," "principles," or "science" in the title—which reformulate literary theory from first principles, in order to accommodate existing materials to the new concepts. In sixteenth-century Italy a number of treatises attempted to adjust Aristotle's *Poetics* to the doctrines and literary forms of a Christian culture. In the mid eighteenth century Lord Kames set out to assimilate the psychology of sensation and association to neoclassical literary theory by ascending "to principles from facts and experiments," in the hope by this procedure to convert the new science of mind into "the science of criticism." Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* was the product of his persistent attempt to act as "the arbitrator between the old school and the new school," and to bring inherited critical concepts into line with the idealism and organicism of contemporary German philosophy. Some thirty-five years ago I. A. Richards, in his *Principles of Literary Criticism*, restated traditional critical ideas in terms both of the psychology of impulse and equilibrium and of the new and exciting field of semantics. Looked at in the light of these works, Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton University Press [Toronto: S. J. Reginald Saunders & Co. Ltd.], 1957, pp. x, 383, $6.90) is an attempt to resystematize the field of criticism so as to save the existing phenomena, yet to work in the implications for literary analysis of three recent and interrelated developments: depth psychology, the theories of ritual and myth in Frazer and other cultural anthropologists, and the revival of serious interest in mediaeval symbology.

Professor Frye has written a big, packed, compendious, and audacious book. He undertakes specifically a "science" of criticism which, following the model of the modern natural sciences, is constructed on the basis of "an inductive survey of the literary field." His aim is to achieve what criticism has always lacked, a body of knowledge which, like any genuine science, will be systematic, coherent, and progressive (pp. 6–11). This knowledge is not to be exclusive but "synoptic"; that is, it will incorporate everything that is valid in existing approaches to literature. Aristotelian poetics, aesthetic criticism, literary history and scholarship, the new criticism of text and

texture, the newer criticism of myth and archetype, mediaeval hermeneutics —all are accepted and given their due places in a single critical system. Frye puts his claim modestly: the book consists of tentative "essays . . . on the possibility of a synoptic view." But it is clear that, however subject to refinement and expansion, these essays are conceived as the prolegomena to any future criticism. The book considers all varieties of literature, from the simplest and most "naïve" to the most sophisticated and complex, and it moves from the elementary treatment of metrics and sonantal patterns, through the analysis of images and symbols, to the consideration of character-types, narrative structures, and *genres*. Constantly it yields a freshness of insight by cross-cutting the traditional perspectives and stereotypes of criticism. It is a strikingly original achievement, of bewildering scope and complexity. And it raises a host of questions which will provide topics of literary debate for years to come; the book will be attacked and it will be defended, but it will not be ignored. All a reviewer can do, after a preliminary reading, is to identify a few of the larger issues that it so spectacularly raises.

First is the question of the synoptic system itself. In Frye's conspectus, the field of criticism falls into a diagrammatic form with multilateral symmetries. There are, for example, five modes of criticism, in parallel with five phases of symbolism; then three kinds of archetypes, each exhibited in seven matched categories, and falling, in their narrative forms, into the four cardinal *mythoi* (comedy, romance, tragedy, and satire), arranged in a circle so that each has two neighbours and an antithetic form; furthermore, each *mythos* incorporates, *mutatis mutandis*, the same four character-types, and is subdivided into six phases or species; these in turn divide neatly down the middle, three approximating ever more closely to the myth-form on the right and three to the myth-form on the left; and so on. The whole is reminiscent of the mediaeval encyclopedic tables designed to comprehend the *omne scibile*; instinctively though in vain the reader looks for an appendix that will open out into a square yard of tabular diagram.

Undeniably, systematic classification is necessary to order and make manageable any field of knowledge, and it can be charged that any classification, however indispensable, to some extent falsifies the phenomena it subsumes. The solution to this difficulty lies in keeping the system as open and flexible as possible, and in maintaining a balanced responsiveness between the categories and the data. Systems which are too elaborately symmetrical tend to keep order by tyrannizing over the unruly facts. And once you begin an intricately ordered pattern, it seeks closure by reproducing mirror-images of itself:

> Grove nods at grove, each alley has a brother;
> And half the platform just reflects the other.

The danger is that when the total gridwork is completed, not only have you a place for everything but every place must have a something; and that thing automatically inherits a complex set of attributes, correspondences, clan-relationships, and oppositions. In its fearful symmetry Frye's critical

system repeatedly raises the question: to what extent are the inevitable sequences of repetitions, variations, parallels, and antitypes genuine discoveries, and to what extent are they artefacts of the conceptual scheme?

A second matter which is bound to become a *causa belli* is Frye's contention that evaluation must be strictly excluded from a critical theory, either in its premisses or in its application to individual works of literature. His point appears to be that a science of literature, like all sciences, must be objective, that all evaluations are "subjective," an "illusion of the history of taste," and that all hierarchies of literary values express concealed—and temporary—social or moral prejudices. Criticism as systematic knowledge "should show a steady advance toward undiscriminating catholicity." The critic, Frye says, finds Milton a more rewarding poet than Blackmore, but he cannot prove it. For there is a total antithesis between critical theory, which is a world of language, and the "direct experience" of a poem, which is an unmediated response of the nervous system in which "every act is unique and classification has no place" (pp. 20–8). According to Frye's view, it seems, "critical evaluation" becomes a contradiction in terms.

Let it be said that there are considerable grounds for Frye's impatience with the usual rôle of evaluation in theory: the violent fluctuations in literary tastes and fashions; the persistent tendency to build into an ostensibly universal theory of poetry the passing preferences of a poet or a critic or an age; the projection of contemporary ethical, social, or religious prepossessions in the form of a postulated "great tradition" of literature. But Frye seems to me to put the part for the whole. Theory certainly differs from direct literary experience, but the total separation between them is, in practice, neither possible nor desirable to maintain. A well-grounded theory opens our senses to literary possibilities, and, as Coleridge said, though meditation (theory) without observation is vacuous, observation without meditation is blind. Near the beginning of his book, Frye cites the opening words of Aristotle's *Poetics* as the model for his own approach: "Our subject being poetry, I propose to speak not only of the art in general but also of its species . . . [and] of the structure of plot required for a good poem. . . ." A *good* poem; that is, good *as* a poem, according to properly artistic criteria which are founded, not on submerged moral and social premisses, but on the choice and order of elements required to maximize the effects the poem is designed to achieve.

At any rate, if in his own theory Frye tries to be a scientist, evaluation is always breaking through, even the kind of evaluation which implies a literary hierarchy: "Aristophanes' . . . greatest comedy," "one of the greatest masterpieces of tragic irony in literature, Plato's *Apology*," "the greatest contemporary tragedian, Racine. . . ." And ironically enough, the whole book serves, in effect, to transvaluate established literary values, by putting not only primitive but "popular" literary phenomena on an equivalence with Homer and Shakespeare as the basis for critical generalizations—including melodrama, soap operas, advertising copy, science fiction, nursery rhymes, college yells, and political cartoons.

It is safe to predict that the storm-centre of debate about the *Anatomy of Criticism* will be its adoption of the mediaeval doctrine of four-level

meaning, regarded as applicable to all works of literature, no matter how literally the poet may have intended his work to be read. Some form of polysemism, indeed, is necessary to Frye's thesis that all forms of criticism—including textual, thematic-image, and myth criticism—discover meanings which are simultaneously and objectively existent in any poem. As Frye points out, he modifies the mediaeval conception of the levels in order to incorporate some perculiarly modern concepts. For example, he interprets the "literal" level so as to involve the current view of a poem *qua* poem, or self-contained universe of discourse; and he translates the mediaeval moral and tropological level into the archetypal mode of reading, which discovers the ritual-and-myth-patterns that constitute the underground of even the most sophisticated literary structures. Of the four levels, the archetypal level has the central rôle and is given the most prominence and space; it also raises the most basic and troublesome questions.

We may take for our example Frye's treatment of comedy. Comedy has been a notably stable literary form, and on the literal and "rhetorical" level Frye looks across standard critical concepts and classifications to make many fresh and valid literary discoveries concerning recurrent stylistic devices, situations, character types, and plot forms. He identifies, for instance, the function of "the green world" in comedies such as *As You Like It*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Winter's Tale*, in which the cruelties, conflicts, and injustices of the ordinary world are magically dissolved, all enmities reconciled, and all lovers united. Or he emphasizes, most revealingly, the importance of an organized society in comedy, and the frequency and import of the comic conclusion in a social ritual such as a wedding, a feast, or a dance. Some of these insights may have been effected or expedited by his archetypal bias, but however discovered, they are verifiable on the literal level as literary conventions, or recurrent comic elements and devices.

Then, however, Frye bids us to "stand back" in order, undistracted by surface details, to discern the archetypal organization of a work—its inevitable understructure of generic shapes and its pattern of ritual action and myth. From this perspective distance we find, for example, the shape of the Proserpine myth and its associated ritual of death and rebirth in Shakespeare's Hero, Imogen, and Hermione, and in Spenser's Florimell; in Esther Summerson's attack of smallpox and in the shooting of Lorna Doone; eventually we discover that even Richardson's Pamela and the Belinda of Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* are "Proserpine figures," or archetypal earth goddesses (pp. 138, 183). And at a still further remove we see that the ritual pattern of all comedies recapitulates the "mythos of spring" and the eternal rhythm of the natural cycles.

Unlike most other archetypal critics, Frye explicitly disavows the standard attempts to give a causal explanation for the recurrence of archetypes. Jung's "collective unconscious" (in effect, a theory of the inheritance of acquired mental characteristics) is "an unnecessary hypothesis"; the ritual origin of dramatic forms is merely speculative history; and archetypal patterns are not, like conventions, dependent on the mimicry of literary originals. The patterns, Frye says, are simply there, "however they got there" (pp. 108–12). Which brings up the questions: how do we know they are there? what

is the evidence for the existence of an archetype? And these take us back to Frye's conception of a science of criticism.

The qualifications he cites for a science are coherence, inclusiveness, and the possibility of progress. Many pseudo-sciences, however, exhibit these attributes. Astrology, physiognomy, and the theory of humours were systematic theories that undertook to comprehend all relevant phenomena, and all showed great possibilities for development through the centuries. What seems indispensable to a genuine science is a fourth qualification: it sets out from and terminates in an appeal to facts which enforce agreement from all sane, knowledgeable, and disinterested witnesses, in independent observations. It is relevant to inquire whether Frye's literary data do enforce agreement from all qualified readers. Are they discoverable by independent observations? Could even an initiate predict, in advance of publication, that Frye would discover (p. 190) "displaced" forms of the dragon-killing myth in the cave episode in *Tom Sawyer* and in the hero's release from the labyrinth of past time in Henry James's *The Sense of the Past*?

The concept of "displacement" is, of course, taken from Freud, and it is instructive to consider Freud's canons of natural, or unintended, symbolic meaning, which include all the standard interpretative devices used by symbolist critics of literature. Freud's system permits him to apply alternatively, according to circumstance, the canon of literal meaning (A is A), displacement or substitution (A is B), condensation (A is A+B+C+D . . .), and inversion or transvaluation (A is the contrary of A). It may be that such rules of reasoning are necessitated by the inherent nature of symbolism, whether in the sleeping or waking (i.e., literary) dream, but they serve incidentally to leave considerable room for logical manœuvre between the Law of Contradiction and the Law of Excluded Middle. The cardinal mode of proof, however, in Freud's theory as in all theories of natural symbolism, is analogical. The implicit canon here is that analogy justifies identification: if A is in some respects like B, then A is identifiable as B. This appears to be the standard formula of archetypal reasoning. If the stories of Hermione, Esther Summerson, Pamela, and Belinda are in some respects like the Proserpine archetype, then these stories are all instances of the Proserpine archetype (e.g., Frye, pp. 136–46).

Here it must be observed that the patterns of events in these diverse actions can be made to coincide only on a high level of abstraction, and abstraction, as Frye says in another context, implies "the leaving out of inconvenient elements." Even if we grant, in the first place, that these heroines are all Proserpine figures who act out a ritual death, when we have made that discovery, our task as practical critics has not even begun. For few works differ more radically from each other in constitution, characterization, qualitative feel, and emotional effect than do *The Winter's Tale*, *Bleak House*, *Pamela*, and *The Rape of the Lock*, and the job of a practical critic is to account for each work in its minute particularity. But beyond this, the odd thing about evidence for an archetype is not that you cannot prove that it is present, but that you cannot help proving it, and that there is no way of disproving it. Any extended and complex literary work can, by the omission of unsuitable elements, be made to resemble

almost any archetypal shape. Since there is no firm possibility of negative observations, archetypal statements are empirically incorrigible, and incorrigible statements are not good grounds for a science of criticism; one may doubt whether many archetypal statements are even, in the strict sense, significant empirical propositions. This point is perhaps implicit in Frye's assertion that "it is not sufficient to use the text as a check on commentary," for "the poet unconsciously meant the whole corpus of his possible commentary . . ." (p. 342).

Consider a parallel instance. I am not one of those who find four-leaf clovers, but my wife is. I search a bed of clover diligently for fifteen minutes without finding a one, and she stoops casually down and picks two. I have to admit that, though I hadn't seen them, the four-leaf clovers were actually there. Again: I have never noticed that the world is full of quincunxes. Then I read Sir Thomas Browne, who points them out everywhere, and—well, yes, I have to admit that, in a way, the quincunxes are actually there, too. But they are not there in the way that four-leaf clovers are there, but only in the way that circles, triangles, and dodecagons can also be shown to be there, given the prepossession and the will. And so with any conceptual scheme that uses distant analogy as proof and possesses built-in expedients for universal application. The same literary work in which the archetypist discovers a seasonal myth will turn out to have a quite different pattern of sub-surface meaning when analysed by a Freudian, a Marxist, a Nietzschean, or a Hegelian critic.

As a science, accordingly, a thoroughgoing archetypal theory of literature does not resemble physics, chemistry, or biology nearly so much as it resembles alchemy. In its complete philosophical form, alchemy also relied on a universal system of correspondences between the physical, mental, moral, and divine worlds, and interpreted analogy as identity and parallelism as proof. There is a further similarity in the drastic reductive tendency of both conceptual systems. On Frye's fourth, or anagogical, level of reading, any one poem, as I understand it, is seen to incorporate the universe: its language becomes the Logos, and its protagonist becomes all mankind, envisioned as a Man-God (pp. 115 ff.). And on the third, or archetypal, level, we also find a steady regress to unity. The individual comedy, for example, falls together with other comedies into one basic comic pattern; the comic pattern in turn plays variations on the spring mythos; the spring mythos is referred back to the vernal segment of the seasonal cycle, and eventually falls into place with romance (summer), tragedy (autumn), and irony and satire (winter) in a unitary process which is continuous, complete, and self-sufficient, and is represented by that ancient figure of perfection, the circle. Any work of literature, therefore, which to the short-sighted reader seems to have its own beginning, middle, and end, turns out in the longer view to be only a phase in a single pattern of death and rebirth whose end is always in its beginning.

Frye maintains that criticism, like science, needs such "a central hypothesis" in order to see individual phenomena "as parts of a whole" (p. 16), and that the only cure for the endless proliferation of conflicting literary commentary is the view that "criticism has an end in the structure of

literature as a total form" (p. 342). But the regress to one hypothetical *Urmythos* behind the multitude of individual literary phenomena does not correspond to the ever widening generality of the sequence of physical hypotheses, from Kepler to Newton to Einstein; nor does the concept of an archetype of archetypes have the function in criticism of Einstein's unified-field theory in physics. Its function, in fact, is not scientific but metaphysical, and its relation to literary particulars is like the relation of the one to the many in Neo-Platonic philosophy, in which the method of reasoning is a steady movement from the multitude of particulars back, through a progressively narrowing sequence of types, to the One or the Absolute. This yields a "certainty," indeed; but it is not the certainty of empirical proof, it is the security of an ultimate abiding place for the monistic compulsion of the human spirit.

What I have said about the *Anatomy of Criticism* will be misunderstood if it is taken as an attempt to refute or disparage this notable book. My intention is rather to isolate and identify the nature of its particular achievement. On the literal level, or in its many other aspects which can be translated into literal terms, it provides as large and varied a body of critical insights as any book in recent years. Many of these can be looked upon as valid elements in a science of criticism, according to the criterion for a science which, Aristotle suggests, is the only one an educated man will apply: that it yield just so much precision and certainty as the nature of a particular subject will admit. As for the remainder, though it is not science, it is a thing no less valid or rare—it is wit, "a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike." When we are shown that the circumstances of Pope's giddy and glittering Augustan belle have something in common with the ritual assault on a nature goddess, that Henry James's most elaborate and sophisticated social novels share attributes with barbaric folk tales, and that the ritual expulsion of the *pharmakos*, or scapegoat, is manifested alike in Plato's *Apology*, in *The Mikado*, and in the treatment of the umpire in a baseball game, we feel that shock of delighted surprise which is the effect and index of wit. Such criticism is animating; though only so, it should be added, when conducted with Frye's special *brio*, and when it manifests a mind which, like his, is deft, resourceful, and richly stored. An intuitive perception of similarity in dissimilars, Aristotle noted, is a sign of genius and cannot be learned from others. Wit-criticism, like poetic wit, is dangerous, because to fall short of the highest is to fail dismally, and to succeed, it must be managed by a Truewit and not by a Witwoud.

Professor Frye argues eloquently that the theory and practice of literary criticism is a humanistic and liberal pursuit; and one of the functions of both criticism and a liberal culture, as Matthew Arnold pointed out, is a free and disinterested play of mind. The *Anatomy of Criticism* is a remarkable instance of that free and delightful play of ideas around literature which has always been a distinction of the urbane and civilized mind.

M. H. Abrams

Young Mackenzie King

The late R. MacGregor Dawson's *William Lyon Mackenzie King: A Political Biography*, I: *1874–1923* (University of Toronto Press, 1958, pp. xiv, 521, $7.50), is, in more than one way, a remarkable book. Its production may possibly have taken more time, required the effort of more people, and cost more money than that of any single biographical volume in the English-speaking Commonwealth. The limits of this rash generalization would certainly have to be set at the Commonwealth. They might more properly be restricted to Canada; and the United States, where the painstaking thoroughness of German-American scholarship can always be supplied by scores of ardent researchers and financed by stupendous sums of money, would most definitely have to be excluded. Yet even American scholarship, with its research teams and its "massed typewriters" in Steven Runciman's phrase, might, if it knew all the facts, look very respectfully indeed upon the vast labours of what might be called the Mackenzie King Historical Enterprises Incorporated. These labours began about a decade ago, before the death of their subject, the late Mackenzie King. Their raw material, the King Papers, which comprise close to two million pages of documents, would surely be enough to provide even the most voracious American scholarly appetite with a fairly satisfying meal. For years a "team" of experts worked in the Public Archives of Canada filing and cataloguing the King Papers; for another period of years, another "team" of experts worked in Laurier House assisting Professor Dawson in the composition of the biography. Even now, after this almost fabulous expenditure of effort, the end is not yet. Only the first volume of the biography has appeared. There will, we are assured, be two more.

It is a tragedy that Professor Dawson did not live to complete the work upon which he had been engaged so long and which promised to enhance his reputation so much. Mackenzie King's literary executors could hardly have chosen a better biographer. They wished, we are informed, to secure an author "who is in general sympathy with Mr. King and his work and career"; and certainly, on this fundamental point, their wishes seem to have been gratified. This reviewer has a vivid recollection of meeting Professor Dawson in Ottawa, early in June 1957, just two days after the rejuvenated Conservative party had scored its first astonishing electoral victory. "What," Mackenzie King's biographer exclaimed loudly—and despite the beginnings of his illness his voice boomed with its old resonance—"what is the explanation of this appalling catastrophe?" "General sympathy" was undoubtedly what Dr. Dawson felt for the career of Mackenzie King and the fortunes of the Liberal party; but this is a feeling which most good biographers have for their subjects, and it was far from being the only asset which Dr. Dawson brought to the execution of his task. His knowledge of Canadian politics and Canadian history was very great; he was interested in the complications of human character; he had a detached, amused attitude to the ironies, contradictions, and absurdities of public affairs; and he could

write a good, straightforward, forceful prose style. He was, however, a political scientist, who had been more concerned with description and analysis than with narrative; and it is arguable that a biography—unless it be a study frankly analytical in character—should be based on what the publishers like to call "a strong story line."

Dr. Dawson had, we are told, completed considerable portions of the later parts of the King biography; but the present volume, which covers the period 1874–1923, is the only one which will be wholly his. It begins with King's boyhood in Berlin (Kitchener) and his undergraduate days at the University of Toronto and ends with his triumphs as leader of the Canadian delegation at the Imperial Conference of 1923. In 1923, King was already forty-nine years old; he had been leader of the Liberal party for four and a half years and Prime Minister of Canada for two. The threat to Liberalism implicit in the sudden rise of the Progressive party had given him his first great chance of demonstrating his skill as a party leader and the Imperial Conference had provided an appropriate opportunity for an initial but vigorous statement of one of the most important general policies of his entire career. Yet, though the book does show Mackenzie King in action as party chieftain and national leader, its chief emphasis is on the preparation, rather than the achievement, of the statesman. Its theme is the man in the making; and its chief interest lies in its examination of the growth of King's personality and character and the development of his social and political views.

Beneath a bland, unrevealing, correctly commonplace exterior, a highly complex character lay concealed, as Dr. Dawson's book amply reveals. King was an earnest, sincere, high-minded, friendly young man, a young man of genuine ability, considerable learning, broad sympathies, and generous impulses. He was all these things no doubt; but there were also times when his conduct appeared remarkably like that of a calculating, self-centred, self-seeking, and sanctimonious prig. These curious contradictions, these elaborately entangled complexities, these odd dark spots on the healthy open aspect of King's Christian goodwill are excellent material for character study. They interested Dr. Dawson, though there are hints that he regarded them with some impatience and disapproval. They will interest the reader of the book. And they obviously fascinated King himself. The diary in which he wrote so copiously, and of which Dr. Dawson has made such excellent use, and the lengthy letters which he was always dispatching to members of his family show him constantly engaged in the congenial exercise of analysing his own motives, questioning his purposes, doubtfully examining the morality of his conduct, and beating his breast about his sins. His heart bled for humanity; he burned to do good for all mankind. At the same time he had a very shrewd idea of the realities of any situation, he liked to make influential friends, he wanted power, and he aimed at the highest office in the land. It is perhaps not altogether surprising that he came a little uncertainly to a fairly familiar reconciliation of these human contradictions; the power he desired would not be used for himself, but for the betterment of the Canadian people.

This unremitting, purposeful search for power, this high-minded desire for disinterested public service, can now be described and narrated, from the immense resources of the King Papers, with an intimacy which was never possible before. There are not a great many startling discoveries or novelties in Dr. Dawson's book; but the whole story of this period of King's career has been given a greater depth and richness and subtlety of colour. It is here, of course, that the first volume of *William Lyon Mackenzie King: A Political Biography* differs most markedly from its predecessors, Mr. Bruce Hutchison's *The Incredible Canadian*, and *The Age of Mackenzie King: The Rise of the Leader*, by Messrs. H. S. Ferns and B. Ostry. In Mr. Hutchison's biography, the first phase of King's career down to 1923 was dealt with in fewer than a hundred pages. Messrs. Ferns and Ostry's study covered much the same period as the Dawson book and at roughly the same length; but it was based largely on public documents, not private letters, for the King Papers were then, and still remain, the monopoly of the official biographers.

The Ferns and Ostry study was written in a critical spirit and from a well-defined point of view; but the point of view was one which would likely interest modern readers, even though many of them would be disposed to reject it. And here perhaps the irreverent critique has a certain advantage over the serious official biography. Dr. Dawson's point of view, particularly in the latter, more strictly political chapters of his book, is that of a devoted Liberal of the early 1920's who seems only imperfectly aware of what has happened in the succeeding thirty-five years. World War II, the Cold War, and the rise of the imperialistic super-powers Russia and the United States, have all combined to cast an air of unreality over King's great crusade for Dominion status and a separate and independent Canadian foreign policy. But Dr. Dawson either does not realize this or does not like to believe it. His mood often resembles that of an ardent party worker who is going to a congratulatory dinner for Mr. King on his triumphant return from the Imperial Conference of 1923. In his book we hear the authentic 1920's accents of King, and O. D. Skelton and J. W. Dafoe. The odd thing is that Robert MacGregor Dawson seems to be talking exactly the same language. He employs the old phraseology—"imperial control," "centralized machinery," "blank cheques," "binding commitments," the clipped, defaced, worn-down, intellectual coins of the early 1920's—as if they were bright new pieces fresh from the mint.

Official biographies are often dull and this could definitely not be said of the present work. It maintains a fairly steady, moderate rate of interest throughout. But King was not a very obviously attractive person, nor his early career a very exciting one; and there are moments also when one is reminded sharply that Dr. Dawson has come rather late to the difficult business of managing a sustained narrative. He has always written a good, serviceable, lucid, and vigorous prose, and he does so still; but there are times when the style seems tired, or heavy, or unresponsive to the opportunities of the material. The book is, however, a solid, workmanlike, finished achievement, like everything else that Dawson did; and one can only hope

that the concluding volumes of the biography will be completed at the same high level of accomplishment.

D. G. CREIGHTON

Science and the Humanities

Science and the Creative Spirit: Essays on Humanistic Aspects of Science, by Karl W. Deutsch, F. E. L. Priestley, Harcourt Brown, and David Hawkins, under the editorship of Harcourt Brown (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1958, pp. xxviii, 165, $4.50), is the outgrowth of a conference sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies on relationships between science and the humanities. The authors of the four essays, which derive from exploratory discussions carried on by a larger committee, are all humanists "interested in the human and social bearings of scientific investigations." They undertake to illustrate the rich diversity of treatment which is possible and appropriate within the general field, and to suggest what clues may best be followed in this complex situation. The approach has been very carefully mapped, and the contributors have avoided a hortatory or emotional tone. They assume good will on the part of both scientists and humanistic scholars, and undertake to explore the situation without making excessive claims for unity or identity of interest, or for any one point of view. "While this book results from an effort to reduce the area of disagreement between humanist and scientist, it does not seek that end by denying that conflict exists" (p. xxvii).

The essays divide into two pairs. Professors Deutsch and Hawkins try to place science in the broad perspectives of the range of human experience and the growth of civilization. Professors Priestley and Brown study more particularly the impact of science on the modern literary culture of England and France. A divergence, not necessarily a deep disagreement, appears here. Professor Hawkins finds an expression or realization of humanistic values in the activities of pure science itself when fully understood. Both he and Professor Deutsch take exception to President Conant's sharp distinction between science as cumulative and therefore progressive, and art as non-cumulative and therefore non-progressive. Scientific discovery, they point out, has its moment of unique insight, its *Geistesblitz*; art is in some sense cumulative, and even the most original of artists cannot work as though no other artists had ever existed. These filiations are taken to mean that science and the humanities alike illustrate the course of human creativity. Professor Hawkins makes the following drastic statement: "If the creed of the humanist indeed be expressed by the maxim, *Nihil humanum a me alienum puto*, then the essential humanistic aspects of science are to be found, not in the method of science if there be such a thing, and not in the results of science as they appear in textbooks, and not in the external influences of science on industry or on politics or poetry or painting, but in the life of science as an expression of human capacities and limitations" (p. 131). Without putting too much emphasis on isolated phrases, we may be helped in trying to grasp some of the central issues raised in this book

if we ask ourselves whether "the life of science" can attain such expression in purely scientific terms.

For the most part these essays consider science as one field alongside others, and describe influences, interchanges, and constraints between scientific and non-scientific fields. Professor Deutsch studies scientific knowledge and humanistic knowledge as they interact and participate in the growth of civilization. The comprehensive and closely packed essays by Professors Priestley and Brown trace for the most part influences from science on literature, illustrating the different ways in which a rapidly advancing and dominant science may affect literary artists, directly or indirectly. Since students of the humanities are likely to give an oversimplified account of an artist's use of science, it is good to have our attention called to science as an extended and underlying influence. Only at a few points do the examples of the literary use of scientific themes given in these essays seem to me to be random and inconclusive, as in the list on page 33, which includes *The Magic Mountain*, *Arrowsmith*, and "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death," or another sampling on page 122, which ranges from *The Doctor's Dilemma* to Jules Verne. Here we can repeat what has often been noted in studies of literary influence: the important influence may appear not as a specific borrowing but as a pervasive force.

A long historical perspective opens here. Professor Deutsch says of the entire Western scientific tradition, in relation to general patterns of human thought and experience: "The interplay of memory and recombination, of tradition and rationality, of calculation and intuition, of recognition and style, can all be found to a greater or less extent in the pre-Socratic science of the early Greeks, in the Aristotelian science of their later successors, in the scholastic science of the high Middle Ages, and perhaps even in the science of Descartes" (p. 15). Broadly conceived, there has always been interaction between science and poetry: one thinks of Greek tragedy, of Lucretius and Dante. But it is for the best that the two literary essays begin with the seventeenth century, and describe in different ways a kind of new accord between literature and science. Some of the issues here discussed are as recent as certain key words; "creative" as applied to human activity dates from the eighteenth century, and William Whewell coined the word "scientist" in 1840. One difficulty in summarizing the effect of science on English literature since the seventeenth century is that it is hard to operate throughout with such terms as Anglican and Puritan, classicism and the non-classical tradition, Whig panegyric and whatever its opposite may be. When men felt that science was a unifying rather than a divisive cultural force they tended to become exponents of a widely accepted attitude which cuts across social and party lines and for which there is no satisfactory label—an attitude towards God and nature which involves an aesthetic of order and an aesthetic of sublimity. At the same time, satirists might attack the scientists' self-sufficiency or pride, and what seemed to be their pedantic preoccupation with trifles. And in the long run the Baconian tradition worked against the validity of the imagination. We are hampered here, as Professor Priestley points out, because the opposition to science in the second half of the eighteenth century has never been fully studied.

Throughout there is an implicit distinction between the incidental use of scientific imagery, as in the early work of Dryden, and the use of scientific ideas "to supply major structural elements" or "major symbolic patterns," as at times in Shelley. A student may find that the poets' more important uses of science are largely conditioned by the extent to which the new can be assimilated and adjusted to older traditions. Close studies of poetic diction seem to point to this conclusion. Newtonian attraction blends with older modes, and in a later age evolution must be taken as a fuller version of the divine plan. The situation can be stated in the terms used by Professor Priestley. Poetry, involving thought, feeling, and emotion, and giving unique expression to the rich complexity of experience, must somehow include the activity of scientists in its synthesis. But this accommodation becomes difficult as far as science sets up on its own as a metaphysic, and when it seems to be playing a decisive rôle in an age of triumphant technology. The result is the modern *Angst* or *angoisse*.

The course of development in later times is further illuminated in Professor Brown's essay. For the seventeenth century the French situation is described in somewhat different terms from the English. French classical literature restricts itself to social and moral man and his institutions, avoiding the fields in which natural science ranges freely. Yet the clarity, concentrated relevance, and precision of this literature show something like scientific rigour. "How this relationship is to be defined—whether a change in outlook produced both phenomena simultaneously, or whether the vogue of the scientific method produced the reforms which literature needed in all its *genres*—these are questions to be solved only by more elaborate documentation in the sociology of French culture than is now available" (p. 101). As stated here, the probabilities would seem to be in favour of the first alternative. It is even possible that the relationship may illustrate the parallel between the creativity of science and creativity in the arts which is a central point in Professor Hawkins' article. Although the eighteenth century both in France and England shows much facile physico-theology, we have concurrently in France from the eighteenth century to the present a sharper recognition of the impact of an advancing science on established beliefs and values. Professor Brown describes a triumph of science in French literature, with an acceptance of drastic consequences that goes far beyond the assertion of naturalism in fiction. One clue which may connect the confused contemporary situation with the past is the suggestion that the stability of classical humanism is analogous to the uniformities of Newtonian physics, that both share the same fate, leaving modern man in a state of "anxiety and tension" which is not yet resolved. It may be possible, as Erich Heller has suggested, that the heavy contemporary emphasis on "creativity" may be connected with the loss of religious and social supports in the artists' world. "Without that all-pervasive sense of truth which bestows upon happier cultures their intuition of order and reality, poetry—in company with all the other arts—will be faced with ever increasing demands for ever greater 'creativeness.' For the 'real order' has to be 'created' where there is no intuitive conviction that it exists" (*The Disinherited Mind*, Cambridge, 1952, p. 135).

One hesitates to offer alternative formulations when confronted with these carefully wrought and richly suggestive discussions, but may not a distinction between art as a technique for solving a problem and art as an inclusive expression of human values be in order here? Of course art is always both, but the emphasis may be on one aspect or the other. Heavy emphasis on a special technique, though it may still be in some sort a realization of human value, may not be inclusive enough. Yet the development of technique, though only one phase of the influence of science on literature, is an important phase. Science has its part in the logical rigour of neoclassicism, in the ordering of the perspective of a descriptive-didactic poem (e.g., Lucretius and Thomson), in the novelist's authentication of a background, in his manipulation of point of view or his use of the stream of consciousness, and in many other procedures. Nevertheless, exclusive concern with these procedures imposes severe restrictions on art and makes it less than adequate to human needs. It is perhaps possible to see science in a double rôle, as enriching the procedures of art, and at the same time as stimulating the realization of ultimate values by offering a challenge or threat which must be overcome by a fruitful humanistic criticism.

ALAN D. MCKILLOP

The Variorum Yeats

The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W. B. Yeats, edited by Peter Allt and Russell K. Alspach (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957, pp. xxxvi, 884, $18.50) fulfils an obvious wish on the part of any reader of Yeats, the wish that he could check the alterations by the author he has heard so much about and also read the very early poems not included by Yeats in later editions of his work. In the first case he can watch "full round moon" become "brilliant moon" and later in the same poem, "The Sorrow of Love," "crumbling" or "curd pale" (the latter adjective had quite a long regency) finally at the sixteenth printing or thereabouts succumb to the quieter "climbing," again with reference to the moon. It seems to me that Yeats's own account in *Autobiographies* of the particular adjectives employed in the above changes is corrected by the actual facts of textual variation so inexorably unearthed by the editors and this final accuracy is something a scholar tackling Yeats's verbal indecision really needs.

Of the early poems hidden or forgotten by the author during his lifetime it is interesting to have "The Island of Statues" in its complete form, a dramatic poem exceedingly inaccessible until the present editors did their work. This Spenserian pastiche allows one to identify an influence not usually associated with Yeats, but of course he had his roots deep in the English mythopœic tradition, as deep as Spenser at any rate. This fact with regard to the Elizabethan poet will evidently become even clearer when the poems still in manuscript form are published. "Reprisals," one of the poems written on the death of Robert Gregory, is a perfectly sound poem hitherto un-

collected and unprinted in Yeats's lifetime partly because Lady Gregory might not have enjoyed hearing that her son lay "among the other cheated dead." The uncollected epigram on George Moore which actually ends the poetry text of this volume is not what one wants to remember Yeats by, since it is not half nasty enough to achieve the level of memorable "savage indignation." A variorum edition, however, assumes that you really understand the greatness of its subject and then proceeds to perform a sort of autopsy; this process is bound to show a great many things which like digestive organs were certainly necessary to the development of an author's genius but were not necessarily kept on display for everyone to see.

Since this edition takes the latest text of the poems and works back to the earliest versions with small print and brackets, it is virtually impossible to find out with any ease just what lovely things the early Celtic twilight poems were before Yeats decided that there was more enterprise in going naked. The early poems as they stand in the text sometimes have a rather sandpapered appearance and one does not see why this is so, I think, until one reads through the first versions with all their adjectival, descriptive luxuriance and realizes that they were written according to a completely different but still genuine aesthetic theory that could never quite be mated to the more traditional approach Yeats adopted after the *Responsibilities* volume. However difficult it is to discover fluently the tension between the two aesthetics in this edition, still *all* the facts of that tension are there and it is hard to conceive unless one has actually worked on Yeats just how valuable it is to have a poet with such a tendency to variant finally pinned down.

JAMES REANEY